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TSM
The sunday magazine

THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE VOL. 2 NO. 22 OCTOBER 14 1990 — Price N5.00

IBB's son in traffic drama

SDP chairman –

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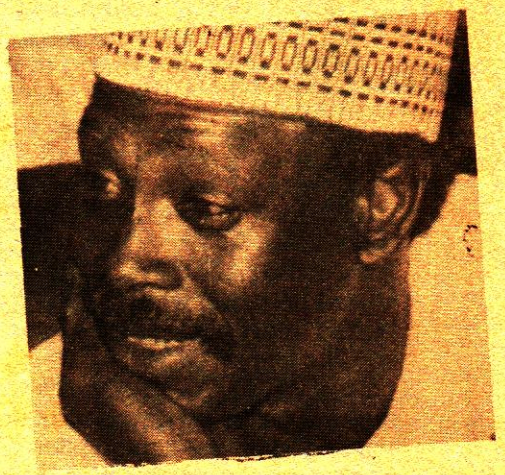
TSM The sunday magazine

VOL. 2 NO. 22

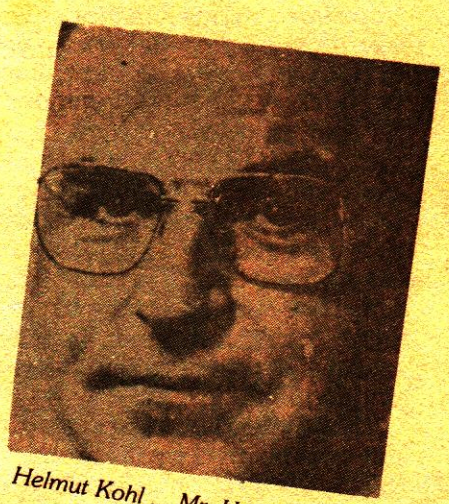
14, OCTOBER, 1990

CONTENTS

- Mathematics of Nigerian politics 12⅔ controversy again? ...6...
- Kingibe eyes Falae ...8...
- With German unification, *world peace* panics ...16...
- Babangida's son causes a stir on the highway ...18...
- Nigerian businessmen attack Company Decree ...26...
- Power Uti attacks Power Mike. It's hell ...32...
- Glamours live up on stage with Eves ...35...



Kingibe

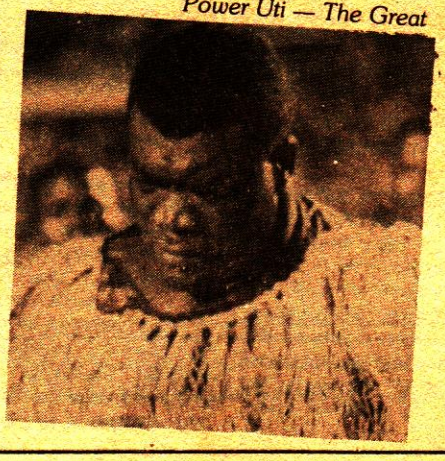


Helmut Kohl ... Mr. Unity

Cover Design: FEMI AWOKOYA
FELIX EDIALE

Mike Okri, Tony Okoroji — Glamour extra-ordinary

Power Uti — The Great



A letter from the Editor -in-Chief

Fame has its own privileges but often it comes with a load of problems. Being famous anywhere in the world ain't easy. Most of all, being famous in Nigeria ain't much fun.

Fame places a special burden on the famous. It places great limitations on one's public conduct and utterances. He's a man in the public eye. What he does, what he says, where he goes, who he's seen with, are always of public interest. Living the life of a famous person could be very cagey.

Most of all in our society where many people make a living by simply staking out public figures, waiting for them to miss a step. Escaping the prying eyes of the public could be quite an ordeal. There's no privacy anywhere and not even one's wealth or power can buy him that privacy. Like Americans say it, "you can't get away with nothing." Being famous in Nigeria could get to be a big pain in the neck. A minor incident, before you know it, it's all over town. Being famous is a bloody pain in the neck here. That's what little Mohammed Babangida, son of the President found out 13 days ago when his car had a minor scrape with another motorist's. He found himself in that special predicament where one's face, name and fame handicap him. How could he come out of the car and argue, return insult for insult or even defend himself against an enraged motorist without attracting undue attention?

That is the dilemma of the public figure — often not appreciated by the public. Perhaps if it is appreciated how lonely and how constricting the life could be up there, the public would look to them with a bit more kindness. Mohammed was trying to be the kid next door, going where other kids go and doing what the kids do.

But he found that as always things involving him, no matter how minute, become another bit of news for public consumption.

Being famous ain't much fun. But I'm sure Mohammed will take it in his stride.

Chris

TSM

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TSM (The Sunday Magazine) ISSN 0795-8331) is published weekly for N5.00 by Zest News Limited, 2, Isijola Street, Off Ikorodu Road, Ilupeju, P.M.B. 21687, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria. Letters to the Editor **Ely Obasi**, should be sent to this address. Telephone 966324. Volume 2, Number **22**

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speakout

LETTERS

Doe of woe

After going through your report on the death of Samuel Doe (Vol 2. NO. 19, September 16, 1990) I have come to the conclusion that the human being is the most selfish animal created by God. Imagine the former Master-Sergeant who murdered countless innocent people, including religious leaders, his own close aides, even women and children pleading for mercy when it came to his turn to die!

The tragedy of Doe is indeed a sad lesson for us. It is also a great challenge to all young Africans — for us to terminate the cycle of brutal misrule that Doe personified. Africa's misfortune happened yesterday, it is happening today. Should it also happen tomorrow?

Akilu Magaji,
C/O Shualbu Musa,
P.M.B. 2029,
Katsina.

Is there any way we can get to see the picture of Doe's mutilated body?

Ignatius Nwogwu,
96, Lobo Street,
Owerri

Thank you for your elaborate expose on the Liberian crisis. Now that Doe is dead, Nigerians will know why we need to send some of our soldiers to unwarranted death in Monrovia. We will also know whose interest Nigerian troops in ECOMOG went to serve — that of parochial, egocentric generals or fellow African brothers.

Yomi Oyewusi,
FCE
Pankshin,
Plateau State

Military buck-passing

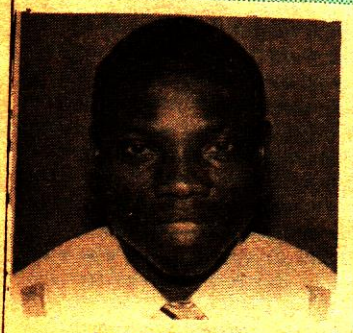
In a write-up titled "Execution of coup plotters: Soldiers blame civilians" (Vol. 2 No. 13 August 12, 1990) some army officers were quoted as blaming civilians for the April 22 coup and the concomitant execution of those found guilty. A Lt. Colonel was reported to have vowed to strangle Great Ogboru for "enticing" Orkar & Co. into the alleged offence. Fine. The brave Colonel is entitled to his opinion. He did not, however enumerate those he "electrocuted", or wished to, for "enticing" earlier — and successful-plotters to strike when they did. Another officer, a Major, was also quoted as saying that they (soldiers) were being enticed to kill themselves and wondered why Orkar & Co. allowed "bloody civilians" to deceive them.

The truth remains that the sad events of April 22 took place within the armed forces circle. We should forget it and stop whipping up silly sentiments.

Chukwuma Ugwouloka,
P.O. Box 624,
Orlu, Imo State

VOICES

How has Nigeria fared in its 30 years of existence?



James Oladimeji
Public Relations Officer

Naturally, as man grows so is a nation. Manhood at 30 should mean self-sufficiency and ability to make ends meet. The story of our 30 years of independence does not call for celebration by any Nigerian. A nation that is 30 years of self-governance and with majority of the population living below the border-line of poverty.

Femi Falana
Lawyer and human rights activist

Nigeria's 30 years of independence were those of wasted opportunities, betrayal of people's hopes and loss of confidence in ourselves as a nation. Despite our abundant human and natural resources, successive governments in Nigeria since 1960 have only succeeded in institutionalising corruption, promoting ethnicity and other divisive tendencies.

Patrick Otojareri
Investment Executive

I think Nigeria has fared well economically in the last thirty years. But one cannot say the same for its political achievements. Socially, provision of social amenities for the citizenry is an apology. If I am to score Nigeria, I would just say fair, because certain achievements that we have the capacity to make are still eluding us.

Richard Mofe-Damijo
Executive Director.

Everything considered, we have taken more wrong steps than right ones in the last 30 years of our independence. I would have loved Nigerians to re-examine themselves and take up the challenge to use what we have got to get what we need. It is high time Nigerians decided what our problems are and how to solve them.

Compiled by Sunday Ojelabi

Nigeria by Mathematics?

By Mohammed Bulama

Read between the lines, you will find the "Orkar Declaration" tucked away as the major agenda of the National Conference.

When he turns 30, it is said of a man that he has come of age. But when a nation clocks 30 it is a different ball game. Many are of the conviction *that nations and men are poles apart when it comes to how much they have made of their days. Three score, they never cease drumming into our ears, is little more than a drop in the mighty ocean in the life span of a country.*

You need no head count, no balloting, secret or open, (or do you?) in Africa's most populous country to know that a more than sizeable chunk of those who call the shots in Nigeria are inclined to reason along that line.

But for how long are we going to wallow under this illusion that our fatherland holds the divine license to fold its arms, clock two centuries or thereabout (just because the Yankees or whoever had to wait that long to make it big) and then development, like manna, will drop from high heavens? You get things done only when you are willing to get them done. You will do well to ask the pint-sized men of the far-East, for they know. The breathtaking performance in nation building of the high riding orientals says it loud and clear that Rome was not built in one day because it was not built in the jet-age.

Nothing impedes taking giant, steady steps forward like one pulling the rug under one's own feet. And that's what we have virtually been doing, wobbling and fumbling without any discernible bearing, since the British granted us the permission to produce "Anglosised" Nigeria under license three decades ago. If governance is all about the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and Nigerian rulers its students, the report cards they are bound to take home, I dare say, will be the kind that will elicit depression from any parent that knows what he wants for his offspring. The performance has been very transparently mediocre.

So, those of us who are frequently given to shouting everybody down, insisting that the shape Nigeria's future should take has long been decided and sealed (they say, by consensus) can tell that to the birds. It takes no expertise to know that there is only one valid

trick to build a nation and it is called 'Do it yourself.' If, therefore, it is the obligation of the tens of millions of us who have no other to call our country but Nigeria to build it, it is also our concomitant right to determine how we want it built. I have my serious doubts if we have done that yet.

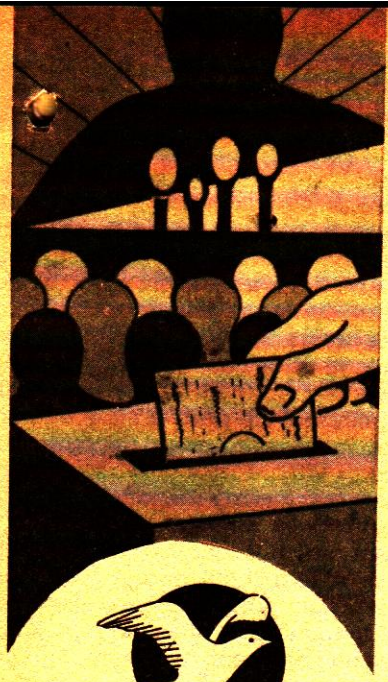
It only stands to reason that if holding a national conference will make lots of Nigerians happy, then let the confab be. But then, I have quite a few bones to pick with its conveners. Just try reading between the lines, and I give you my word, you will find the "Orkar Declaration" carefullly (is it subtlely?) tucked away as the major agenda of the confab. Only this time it is drafted in very refined language. But more than flowery grammar will be needed to convince me that the national question sums up totally to power sharing. And if you are one who cannot understand why the answer to the national question should not be seen in which part of Nigeria produces the helmsman, then you are saying that the right place to lay the blame for the country's ills is the doorsteps of those who hail from the North of the Niger. To right these wrongs, the argument will then go on, the nation's number one citizen must be fished out from among the southern stock. Which is very self-righteous as it is mischievous, to say the least.

When it is the fate of one hundred million people you are dealing with, you don't tinker with it like it is a mathematical equation you are solving. But even if the national question were amenable to mathematical calculation, you cannot draw on formulae that are constructed on the premise that the North and the South's interests are mutually exclusive and expect to be taken seriously.

The troubled days are not yet over for this country so long as those who should know better, or are touted to, pretend not to know that the few beneficiaries of our collective entity are, regardless of their regional origin, all intimate bedfellows. Or when they feign ignorance of the undisputable fact that the plight of the northern pauper and of his southern counterpart are identical.

And to cap my suspicion, I have waited patiently for the day my fellow compatriots (the "Democrats") will come with the re-assurance that it does this country no good to perpetuate selective patriotic disposition, but it seems such day is not in sight. I have sat back, expecting that one day, they will say drawing a line (where one does not exist) between two identical objects smacks of double standard, which is a despicable trade. I have taken my time, confident the day will come when the conveners of the jaw-jaw session will swear that they cannot touch, with a 10 foot pole, any opinion which labels Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, a religious bigot, and portrays Arch-Bishop Olubunmi Okogie as a crusader, or one which condemns Sani Kontagora (of Hotline) *as a myopic sectionalist and hails Chris Okolie (of* Newbreed *as a selfless champion of the people's cause. That re-assurance has not come yet.*

Say, isn't Nigeria our common possession? And who says one can be deprived of the right to dialogue about his fatherland? Yes, I am for dialogue, but let's level it out, first.



Politics & Policy

We haven't zoned the Presidency

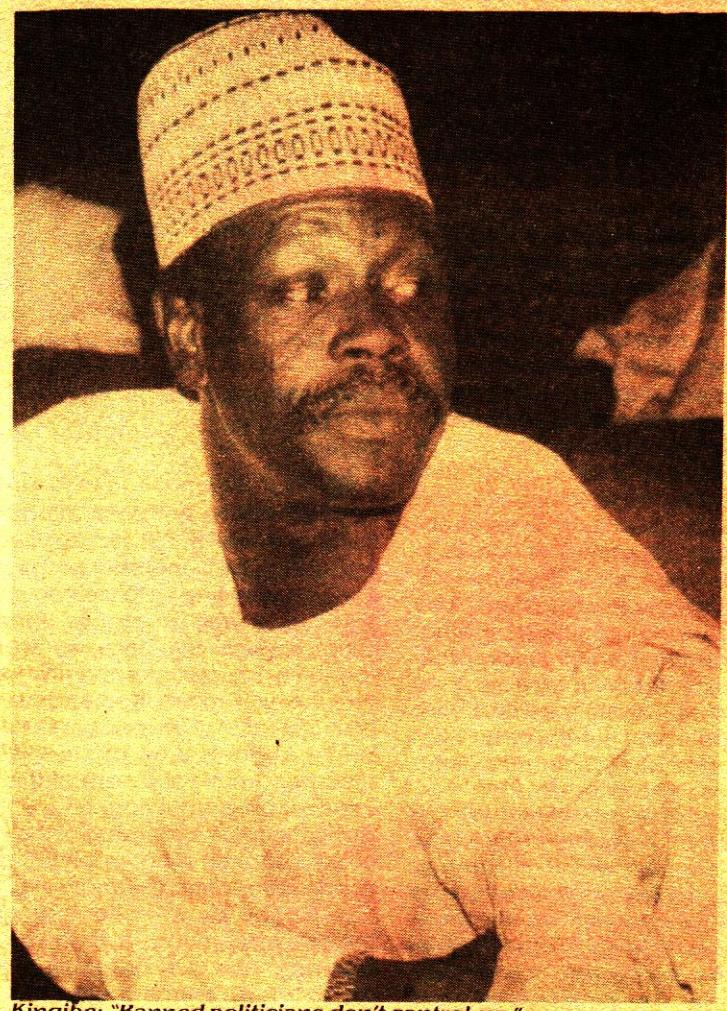
— Baba Gana Kingibe, SDP Chairman

By Kayode Samuel and Yusuph Olaniyonu

He threw the last question right back at his interviewers. And in so doing got an answer he apparently didn't feel entirely comfortable with. At the end of what turned out to be a marathon interview (originally billed, by mutual agreement, to last just thirty minutes) we asked the man to tell us straight from the heart what kind of person he thinks he is. But instead of offering a self-portrait, the man retorted: "Tell me about me." Which we promptly did.

Our appraisal of Baba Gana Kingibe, 45, ex-State House staffer, high-flying diplomat, and national chairman of the Social Democratic Party is that he sounds articulate, that he is slippery, and that he is as sincere as a politician can be. Articulate he wouldn't make too much of an issue of; no doubt out of a sense of modesty. But the diplomat-politician was at pains to argue down the "slippery" tag put on him. As indeed any diplomat-politician would.

Talking with the sparsely framed Kingibe in his sparsely furnished Ikoyi home was something of a sparring session. A stickler for facts and a self-confessed democrat, the SDP leader is not one to allow you win an argument on the strength of assumptions and insinuations. We came away with the distinct feeling that the more voluble of his partymen who assume they have it all made as far as the party's presidential candidacy is concerned could be in for a rude shock.



Kingibe: "Banned politicians don't control us."

With Ojo Maduekwe, the highly visible — and increasingly controversial — party chieftain sitting quietly in the wings all through the conversation, a somewhat high intellectual tone was set for the interview. But we shouldn't pre-empt your judgement. Please read on:

TSM: What quality of leadership will the SDP offer Nigeria? What qualities or qualifications will the party demand of its candidates for executive and legislative offices?

KINGIBE: The party obviously will nominate its candidates for elective posts based on some guidelines. There will be guidelines. What I will like to stress straight away is that this is a democratic process. The ultimate criterion for merit in a democratic process is acceptability to the majority of the people. That is the ultimate criterion.

Q: Apart from the dictates of the democratic process, won't there be other more specific requirements like educational and moral qualifications?

A: The process of nomination will certainly involve certain judgements on the candidates seeking to be selected to vie for certain offices. But it is invidious to equate elective office with some

kind of nomination for the Nobel Prize. Every job has its objective criteria for success. For example, as we are about to go into the local government elections, now at the level of the ward I would not think of whether candidate A or aspirant B has a Ph.D. It is assumed that everybody has the minimum qualification of school leaving certificate. That is a legal requirement. It would be erroneous to say that the candidate with a Ph.D is automatically more qualified even if when he stands election people in his household won't vote for him. The ultimate criterion as I earlier said is acceptability — to the party membership and to the electorate. We have to nominate our candidate in such a way that his chances of winning on our ticket are maximised.

You mentioned details like moral standards and so on. Acceptability presumes that a candidate has been carefully weighed and found acceptable in all perspectives — moral perspective; sense of responsibility, sense of commitment, dedication to his constituency, his nationalism, and other details. The ultimate consideration at the end of the day is: Is he acceptable to the party? To the electorate? If yes, then anybody else sitting somewhere and passing judgements on him is irrelevant. In this country, people say "Oh so and so is better qualified to be President." Better qualified by what yardstick of judgement? Acceptability? Is he acceptable? If he is not, then he is not better qualified. The better qualified person is the one who held the most posts when you are talking of the democratic process.

Q: Talking about calibre of candidates, it has been mentioned in many circles that former finance minister, Chief Olu Falae is seriously eyeing the presidency on the platform of the SDP. How true is this? Has any overture been made to him? How receptive are key members of your party to his candidacy?

A: First of all, I should say that the SDP is very receptive, of course, most receptive. I insist that any member of the SDP has a right to aspire to any elective office on the platform of the party. Mark my words, MEMBER. As far as I know, Chief Olu Falae is not a member of the SDP. So the issue doesn't arise.

Q: Of course, it does. You're just parrying like the typical politician.

A: I don't know how the issue arises. You are talking to me about a person who is not a member of my party wishing to use the platform of my party to aspire to whatever office and you insist it arises.

Q: But let us assume that say ten minutes ago, Falae had joined the party. What then happens.

...Falae is a good friend of mine

A: Yes, but he would apply to join as what?

TSM: As a member in Ondo State.

A: Well, I have not been informed of such a thing. But if he applied, he applied to be a member of the party. I will be very happy to welcome Chief Olu Falae who is a good friend of mine, he was my boss, we worked together, I know his capacity. I know that he will make tremendous contributions to the development of the party — that is if he applies to be a member. I am not aware of this. Like I said, if he is applying, he would be applying to be a member of the party. I take it that he is not applying as the party's presidential candidate. I am sure that he knows better than even I the processes involved. He also knows that right now, we are talking about the local government elections. And every member of our party is required to do nothing else but to put in hundrerd percent effort to ensure that SDP candidates for the 5,572 councillorship seats and the 453 chairmanship seats triumph at the polls. I am confident that Chief Olu Falae would do his best to ensure the success of all our councillorship and chairmanship candidates.

Q: You sound as if he is a member already...

Q There is the widespread belief that since you the chairman of the party comes from northern part of the country, it means that the party's presidential candidate come 1992 will come from the South. Has that been agreed to by the party?

A: Let me make it absolutely and categorically clear, in SDP we have never ever discussed the issue of the presidency. Never ever. I have made remarks about the presidency. I have made remarks to the effect that well, it is not our priority in the SDP, our priority is the local government election. We are a people-based party. We are talking of, as I have said, 5,572 members of our party who are demanding rightly that the party pays attention to their own aspirations to become councillors. We are talking about 453 members of our party demanding that the party pays attention to them (from council chairmanship). We are therefore talking about roughly 6,000 members of our party who have every right to demand that attention and all the support party can give them. The presidency is talking about one individual. As mighty as the office is, it is one individual. Governorship, we are talking of 21 individuals. You cannot reasonably ask me or the party to ignore the yearnings and the cries for help of over 6,000 members of the party. And you want me to drop this and concentrate on the demands and requirements of 23 people.

Q: There is this talk about squabbles within the SDP between the defunct PSP and PFN factions. The Abuja convention was to be the battle ground for the two factions to test strength. A lot of bad blood was said to have been generated by the outcome of the convention. What is the state of hostility, or is it the state of settlement?

A: Let me conclude my answer to your earlier question. You know I didn't draw the conclusion that since as a party we never discussed the issue altogether of the presidency, therefore any agreement, understanding or assumptions about where the presidential candidate should come from has never been made. That is the truth of the matter. There has never been any discussion about the presidency, where it should come from and where it should not come from. I have addressed myself to this issue often enough. And as I said, the presidency's constituency is Nigeria. And any Nigerian, from wherever, is entitled to seek the presidency on the platform of the SDP. Because there is no point in proclaiming your commitment to the democratic process while in fact your actions are anti-democracy. If for instance we now say the Presidency is zoned to Benue State, we are now denying all other party members from the remaining 20 states, who may wish to exercise their fundamental right to seek that nomination.

Q: Democracy in a society like this, a federalism, is not only in terms of

technical concepts. There is the need to ensure fairness among the various component units of the federation. It is to institutionalise consensus. If a man from Benue is generally agreed to be given the Presidency maybe as a result of historical considerations, then it is serving the cause of democracy, don't you think?

A: (Cuts in) Who zones?

Q: The generality of the people, the party membership.

A: But that is precisely what we are trying to do. Definitely, at the end of the day, a candidate will emerge as our Presidential candidate. And that candidate will come from one state. By the time he emerges, you can very well say that that post has been zoned to that state. But through what process? Who does the zoning? Is it the national executive? Is it all the executive put together at the four levels: National, State, Local government and ward levels? What is the role of the people who should be involved in this zoning exercise? I think that is the issue. And I believe the more restrictive it is, the less democratic it is. We have submitted our party constitution to the AFRC. And in it we have made provisions for the formular for nominating that candidate. And that formular involves a desire to widen the pace of those who will now shoot out and say this is the candidate who should bear the flag of the party. Primaries. It is the system of primary elections. The decision to say what you want exactly, knowing who, to say whoever it is let him come from so, so place. What we are saying is we want to know who it is from wherever in the country. Who are they, those who say they want to be Then we look at those people and then decide, through the process of primary elections and so on who it should be.

Q: We had thought the outcome of the local government elections will decide on which area that candidate emerges from.

A: Let us get this thing clear, the local government election is not a referendum on...

Q: (Cuts in) But your party men are taking it as if it is.

A: Well, I am the national chairman of the party. And I can assure you, we never envisaged the local government election as a referendum by the party on where the presidential candidate should come from. The local government councillors will fight the elections on the basis of constituency issues. What is the relevance of that to the Presidential election?

Q: But some people will claim that "if I can deliver my area to the party and the other guy can't, of what importance is he to the party more than I am."

A: The argument doesn't lie there. It is absolutely important for any aspirant to prove he has support at his home base. And part of that proof is the strength of the party in his state. It is an indication of support for his party. Now, that support, how do you translate it. We have 303 wards in Borno okay. And we have 24 local governments in the state. 303 individuals who want to be councillors will contest against their NRC opponents. And likewise, the 24 local government chairmen. They will be selected on their merit by their constituencies.

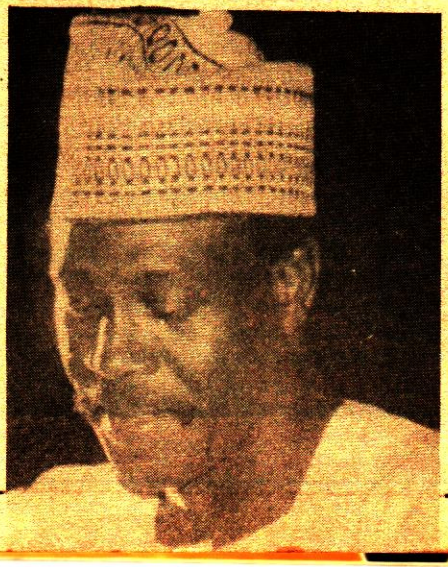
Suppose, and I hope, the SDP sweeps the 303 councillorship and 24 chairmanship posts, how is that a reflection of the support the people of Borno State have for say Alhaji Mohammed Adamu who is an SDP stalwart and who is seeking the presidency. It is irrelevant. Alhaji Mohammed Adamu did not go and tell all the electorates in the state that 'elect this man and you are supporting my candidacy'. So what is the relevance of what you are saying and where is the logic?

Q: Let's just go back to the question of intra-party squabbles.

A: What happened in Abuja on 24th and 25th of July was a convention of the party which was held to elect the leadership of the party. The first implication is that it was an intra-party, a family affair within the party. Definitely, there are people who were contesting against each other for the various posts at the election. And each contestant had minimally 44 people who were saying this man is the best candidate for this post which he sought. That is the democratic process, with contending interests, contending ideas. By the time convention delegates cast their votes and votes are counted, the issue is dissolved. The contention is over. Now, we are not talking of a mechanical process. We are talking of human beings who are contesting and nobody, nobody ever contests for the fun of it. People contested to win. Nobody enjoys defeat. It is normal. Now, it is a question of what kind of mental and emotional disposition people are made of. As to whether it will be something that will pass in one hour, one day, one week, one month or forever, I believe that any democrat who submits himself to the democratic process ought to psychologically offer to have himself accept the verdict of whatever the electorate is. And not spend the rest of his life licking the wound for an adverse verdict. At least, that is as I conceive the human factor. There is also at another level altogether, not at this level that you are trying to reduce this thing to, PFN, PSP, bla bla.

At the level of ideas when I said I wanted to be chairman, I had a certain notion of the kind of leadership I will provide to the SDP. And I take it that anybody who wants to be chairman must have his own notion. It was the question of let a better argument win. But this argument at the level of ideas is a necessary ingredient or tonic for the democratic process, there must be contending ideas, contending approaches. What democracy offers is the possibility of peaceful and democratic resolution of these contending ideas. And this must go on. That is what enriches the process. That is what enriches the content of what the party stands for. There is nothing that stops...for example, we have set out our manifestoes, our programme of actions, our basic philosophical underpinnings, our ideological underpinnings, it is a consensus. Now at some point in time, there is absolutely nothing that stops, even a national officer from saying no this is not the way to go about it. This is a deviation from our concept of social democracy. The debate will begin. And perhaps at the next elections, it may be on that platform that he will challenge anybody else who is seeking the national post. You understand, there are two levels of contention. Personal/human level and the level of emotional investments people have made in their past and now defunct associations, and the level of ideas. Now the first two are not levels with which I am concerned, overly. Immediately, after the convention, I made all the appropriate statements with all sincerity and I have contacted my principal opponent, and we have indicated that that is the verdict of the people and we have taken it. And I know that he is living with it.

...There's no crisis in the SDP



And I am living with it. So that one goes. At the level of the associations, I have made it clear that whether we like it or not, they are no more existing. The contention of ideas, even if they do not exist, I will deliberately encourage them. Because that is what makes us a victor as a party and that is what strengthens the democratic process.

Q: Does that mean that the much publicised crises within the SDP have nothing to do with bang-overs from the PSP/PFP days? Many observers think that is the root of most of the crises.

A: I want you to know that SDP is a newly formed party. Though it consists of individuals who have their various political histories, the antecedents are not dated to the PSP and PFN alone. There was UPN/NPN, NPP, PRP, GNPP, and also NPC/AG and NCNC. But I want you to know that there is no crisis in SDP. And there will never be considerations on sharing of positions along the PSP/PFN line because majority of the party members are people who did not belong to PFN or PSP. In fact, in a month's time, you will never hear of these two defunct groups. SDP is a party in which individuals decide on their own to join for effective political participation...So the issue of groupings does not arise. I wonder if you people find any problem within the NRC like you do with the SDP.

Q: So how would you react to allegation that the office of the SDP chairman appears to have taken too many of the powers of the party secretary?

A: I don't know what that allegation is supposed to mean. But I believe people should have their facts before coming to conclusions. Let those saying such things get the first cons titution and the amended one for comparison and show me which of the powers of the secretary I have usurped. People should not forget that the constitutions of the two parties were drafted by civil servants who have just undergone the civil service reforms. And the civil service reforms stipulate that the permanent secretary is no longer the chief accounting officer. Rather, the minister is the chief executive officer who is accountable for all the decisions of the ministry. So now the chairman of the party is the chief executive officer accountable and responsible for the decisions and actions of the parties. So if I am the chief executive, isn't it rational that I have to approve of major policies and actions of the party?

Q: Will you say that deliberate encouragement of conflict resolution as seen within the two new political parties, if spread across the nation's politics will prevent yet another coming of the army to power?

A: In fact that is the culture I want to make enduring and a permanent feature in the operations of the SDP. Yes certainly, the executive, local government and state and national executive members of the SDP in the five Eastern States held a meeting in Calabar and they invited me to come and address them. And I did. The direction of their deliberations was entirely pointing towards this, we are moving in that direction. And if one wants to drag down to the level in which you want us to discuss it, in that meeting, there were people who used to be PSP and there were people who used to be PFN. It was indistinguishable who was what, they are now talking SDP. They are now planning strategies for the local government election.

Q: Could we then interprete that meeting to mean mending the cracks

Kingibe ... anybody can aspire

resulting from the controversial election of the party's national secretary?

A: What cracks are there over the secretaryship of the party?

Q: Cracks wide enough to elicit a court action

A: That is between two individuals.

Q: But the two individuals with their supporters are contesting a party post. It is not Anielo and the other Osieke on their own but groups within the SDP.

A: But they are contesting the party post in their own personal capacity. For an SDP post. Well, the issue didn't arise at that weekend meeting. As I have said they discussed only strategies for local government election.

Q: Against the background of the conflict resolution mechanism you have just mentioned, will you say from your assessment of the present political rein, the politicians of today have learnt the lesson of the past and are now better than those of the First and Second Republics?

A: I am sure we are all different in our perception and in our environment than what we were a week ago. That is value judgement. If we are talking of the negative tendencies of which government has not tired of reminding us, of which the press is not tired of reminding us, if you are talking of those negative tendencies, then I will say we are also Nigerians. A member of my national executive, I think is well beyond his 60s. Newbreed is a political term. It is not an actual description of age. We are all Nigerians. We lived through the tribulations of the First Republic, the military interregnum, the Second Republic and the present military intervention. We must have learnt something. This is how nations and political cultures are evolved. The same process applies to human beings. The tendency surely must be to avoid whatever that is negative in our political life of the past. Commit ourselves to a new beginning.

Q: We presume you were in the State House during the Obasanjo era and you were part of the team supervising the military disengagement of the period. Comparing the transition then and that of the on-going programme, which one would you see as better managed?

A: The transition programme of the Obasanjo regime was drawn up in the light of the realities of the moment. The transition programme of the Babangida administration took off from there to date. Now the lessons of not only the formulation of the programme but its implementation and its practicalisation by the constitution and I take it that as a result of all this ...Don't forget that the President was a member of the Supreme Military Council that designed the Obasanjo regime's transition programme. He was very much part of the system. Not only part of the regime, but of the succeeding civilian regime, he was a high ranking army officer and he was working under them. So, I think that is it. You cannot now then ask whether what was done 11 years ago was better than what is being done now. It is not the same thing that is done. It is not the same time they are done. And it is not the same purpose that is supposed to be addressed.

Q: Left to you, which would you prefer-a one-party system, or two-party or multi-party system? Do you think the present party system will solve the nation's socio-political problems?

A: ***If I haven't such hope, I wouldn't***

be a politician. And I wouldn't be involved at the level I am.

Q: What is your view about the recent demilitarisation efforts of the federal government? Do you think it will put paid to the ambition of some soldiers wishing to forcibly take over government with the slightest excuse?

A: Quite frankly, it doesn't mean anything to me or to the process whether this exercise recently undertaken was undertaken or not. The process I am involved in is strengthening the SDP..

Q: But there won't be any election with a restive army?

A: Was the demilitarisation done because the army was restive? Right now there is SDP. I assure you that this SDP is here to stay. And I can assure you that the members of the Social Democratic Party in particular, I do hope, that the civilian political class now are quite prepared to defend democracy and the democratic process at any time.

Q: With your confidence in the survival of the Third Republic, what infrastructure, physical and behavioural, do you think are still needed to ensure a lasting third Republic?

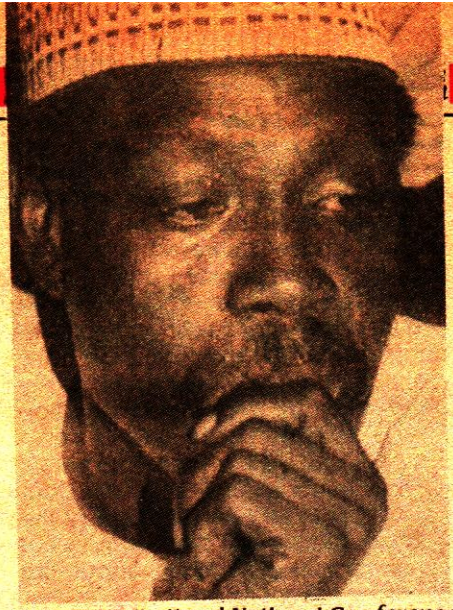
A: The most essential ingredients for a lasting democracy is the cultivation and strengthening of democratic spirit in the individual. What step is there, when it is the people who will be performing certain functions in the state, whether they are running government as president, or they are running parties or whatever. You know once the democratic spirit has taken deep root and achieved good reception in the minds and souls and hearts of the people, it will endure. It is not something you can legislate.

Q: If you had a choice, would you have preferred a two-party system or a one-party or multi party system?

A: I think you are talking to someone who is involved. I can assure you that I do not get involved in any process in which I don't believe. And quite frankly that is my bone of contention with few people who do not accept the transition programme or the two-party system. They ought to have the courage of their conviction and say no to it. They should not be participating and complain it is not right. I am involved. I am participating because I believe in it. I can assure you the moment I don't believe it, I will not be participating..

Q: Your party has just said that it will create more states, if there is demand for such...

A: (Cuts in) I think the question was on something about people of a place where the creation of states whether



We couldn't attend National Conference

my party will oppose it. I said no my party will not oppose the creation of new states if it is desired by the people of the state that is to be created. And, the process of creating new states are there. We will follow those processes. I was surprised that somebody was reported recently as saying that states should be abolished and that we should have a two - tier system of government — Federal and Local Government. I was very surprised because reportedly, the person who made that suggestion, if it is true, then it is surprising coming from somebody who has held very high government positions before; he was chief of intelligence and so on. I am surprised that the very elementary concept of administration might escape such a man. I don't know.

Q: That means you not only believe on the two-party system but also subscribe to the concept of federalism as it currently is?

A: Absolutely. I subscribe to the federal structure, and I subscribe to the three-tier system of government and I do not think that the answer to ameliorating any perceived shortcoming at any of the levels is to abolish it. But it is to improve it.

Q: You have repeatedly said you believe in the democratic system. And that national dialogue and consensus are central to the sustenance of the democratic system. Will you then say the recent official action on the national conference organised to discuss the national question is in line with the tenets of democracy?

A: First, and this is really my concern, is the position of the SDP. The organisers of the national conference wrote officially to the SDP inviting the party to participate. SDP wrote officially to the organisers of the conference informing them that we are not in a position to participate at the moment. And as far as the SDP was concerned that was the end of the matter. And what they wanted to do and were they going to organise the conference or were they not, is their problem or the problem of any invited participant to such conference. But what we found unacceptable was that after that exchange of correspondence, for the organisers to still proceed to publish in the newspapers, the list of participants, including the SDP. That, to us, even raised the question: the other so-called participants, were they also "participants" in the same way as we were supposed to be still participating even after the exchange of correspondence?

So even the claim, of the organisers that 50 individuals and organisations and so on are participating, going by the criterion in which we are now portrayed as participating, casts doubt. And it was important to insist, to indicate, that we are not participating. Our decision not to participate was not taken by an individual, it was taken by the national executive of the party. It was the party position. And the party position, those who were party to the decision not to participate must be wondering where ever they were, how come when we had decided not to participate, the party is now being advertised as participating? So, the record had to be put straight. But we did our duty and our responsibility.

Now the conference was not stopped by SDP. It was stopped by government, I understood, although as one kept reading the back ground to this, it was the proprietors of the venue who denied the venue being made available and the proprietors gave some reasons, which were technical. The matter of availability of light and this and that and so on. It is a question of your judgement as to whose version is correct. I am not aware of the government statement which said the conference should not proceed: "We stopped it". I am not aware of it.

Q: But several government actions pointed to this decision.

A: I refuse always...I was in government and I do not think it is helpful for people to second-guess positions when the facts are there. You can dispute the facts.

But don't construct something to be the fact on the basis of insinuations. It doesn't help.

Q: But judging from the statement of the Justice Minister on the five year jail term awaiting coveners of such conference, one could rightly deduce that he was speaking for the government.

A: I thought you said he is the justice minister. He was only interpreting the

law. What has that got to do with some particular positions.

Q: But it is not everytime you hear the justice minister interpreting the law when government is not against something. (laughter). Anyway, there have been statements about the support given to the SDP by some old politicians like Chief Nzeribe, General Yar'Adua, like the PPA governors.

A: (Cuts in) Continued, who are the PPA governors, Alhaji Rimi. He was the PPA governors?

Q: Chief Jim Nwobodo, Solomon Lar, Alhaji Jakande etcetera. How much influence do these people have on the party and its executives?

A: You see, why I was encouraging you to go ahead and mention names is that I was hoping that you would mention the name of an individual that is a member of our party. You are mentioning people who are not even members of the SDP. And saying that they have had hand in the affairs of the SDP. I am the national chairman of the SDP. I was voted by 1,572 delegates at the national convention. And other people, Alhaji Arzika who contested against me was voted by a

"I will be very happy to welcome Chief Olu Falae to the SDP. I know that he will make tremendous contributions to the development of the party — that is if he applies to be a member. I am not aware of this."

number of delegates. They voted me into office and they voted other members of the executive into their various capacities, the delegates of the national convention. We have had about five to six national executive meetings. And at the SDP executive, I sit with about 36 members of the national executive, we meet, we deliberate on the matters before us and we take decisions on the matter before us. And when we set about implementing these decisions, we circularise and inform our state branches, and our local government branches and our ward branches as appropriate. They are the people who run the SDP. They are the people who will take responsibility for the SDP.

Q: You have not answered the question or rather you answered it like the politician that you are.

A: Please what is the question, I want to answer the question...

Q: The question is how much influence do the people we mentioned have on the party?

A: Now, you see, there is a difference in my not answering your question and your not being satisfied with the answer. I have answered your question. And quite frankly I should have also satisfied you because I have told you for a start that these names of disqualified politicians that you have mentioned are no members of my party. They are disqualified. And I do not see how someone who is not a member of the party, who does not go toward congress meetings, who does not attend executive meetings of the party at any level, I don't know what influence you are talking about that they have on the party.

Q: They have absolutely no influence?

A: On the party? No. They have no influence on me. If they have influence on any member of our executive, then they have influence on individuals. And when these individuals come to

...I am not slippery

"In SDP we have never, ever discussed the issue of the presidency...So anya greement, understanding or assumptions about where the presidential candidate should come from has never been made"

their executive meetings, they don't say "well this disqualified politician instructed me to now sit down and tell you that in this party we must do this and we now say oh if it is master who said so, we will do it." No, no.

Q: Now, tell us about yourself. We do not want things that you included in your curriculum vitae to seek election. Or some other things you tell your party men or women. Something straight from the heart.

A: We have been talking for an hour, tell me about me.

Q: (Cuts in): You sound articulate, you're slippery, and as sincere as a politician can be.

A: Well, you are entitled to your opinion. I can assure you that I see myself differently. And each perception is valid including those who think. I am awful, I am terrible, I am inexperienced, that I make mistakes right, left and centre, I am insincere, I am stupid, I am this and that. It is valid for them. It is their assessment. And I accept it all as part of the normal human judgement. I will like people to see me as they find me. And I cannot dispute anybody's judgement. There are facts which I will dispute. If somebody said, I am 60 years old. No, I will tell them no, I am 45. If somebody said I don't have a school certificate. I will tell them no, I have a university education.

If somebody said that I am not a man of integrity. I will tell him I am. In fact, it is my biggest asset. That I have worked and exposed myself in all situations, and at no point will any

"Immediately after the convention, I made all the appropriate contacts with my principal opponent (Mohammed Arzika) and we both have taken the verdict of the people. I know that he is living with it."

of my colleagues, whether we got on or we didn't get on, the one thing they cannot say is that Anbassador Kingibe when he was this and that did this and that which tended to impunge his integrity. No. But I have also heard from a friend, in fact it was my wife, they were discussing and somebody who did not know she is my wife started telling them about how I am stinking rich. How I have stolen so much, how I have bank account in Switzerland and this and that.

At the end of the day his basis was that I was an ambassador, I was a permanent secretary, therefore...You know that sort of accusation. I don't bother to argue them. In fact, she didn't bother to reply. It's just *that she happened to be there. I wonder how many other places such judgements are being made. But the proof of it is how we fare.*

We're moving towards anarchy

— **Walter Ofonagoro**
Publisher, ex-DG, NTA

SUNDAY OJELABI

There is one thing we have achieved. That is we have been able to Nigerianise the administration of Nigeria at all levels. In 30 years of independence, we are now in a position to send our people out to go and assist other nations less fortunate than ourselves (Technical Aid Corps).

But in Nigerianising everything in the country, we have also introduced certain Nigerian habits that are not very good. And that is the habit of indiscipline. That is part of what we did wrong.

Nigeria of today is no longer Nigeria of 1960. Nigeria was more peaceful and better governed in 1960 than today. There was more equity, more justice than today. If you went to court, you expected to receive justice. There was more faith in law and order than it is today. Today people are just taking laws into their hands. People do not believe their right can be protected any more. They want to do the protection themselves. In fact, we are projecting towards anarchy. It was not there before.

What have we done wrong?

We have not been able to achieve political stability. In 30 years of independence, we have had more than eight governments. Eight governments in 30 years! This is an average life span of 2½ years.

There are serious problems and they verge on the national question. There must be equal opportunities for all Nigerians. We must look for the most competent person to run Nigeria. Not necessarily the most competent person of a particular tribe of the country. The most acceptable I refused to believe that Nigerians are entrapped in the bigotry of tribalism, sectionalism and religious intolerance. My own experience in public service shows that Nigerians across the board recognise achievement and talent. If a man is capable of being the chief of Army Staff, don't deny him because he doesn't come from a tribe or a particular section of the country. If a man is qualified to be vice chancellor do not frustrate him because you think his tribe will dominate your own. If a man is better than you on a job, why do you need to go and lobby and throw him out when you yourself know you are incapable of handling the position .

We had people who want positions but who are fully aware that they are incompetent and incapable of fulfilling the conditions. But they want to stay on the Chairs and let the people who are competent tell them what to do. After all, people under him will do the work. All he needs to do is sit and entertain his friends. We cannot go forward under this circumstance. Nigeria was not run that way during colonial times. Britain is not run under that tradition. America, Germany, India, China are not run that way. When Nigerians go outside the country, they become first class managers because there, the conditions are right. But when you want to make *'magomago'* in the place. Then Nigeria will go behind and start looking for how to manoeuvre to survive. The rule of the game determines the performance. The country must get back to rectitude. Put back the standard in public life. And leave moral rearmament and ethical re-orientation to the church. Put back internationally recognised concepts of good and bad, right and wrong. And failure and success, don't be partial and impartial, we should begin to concentrate on the capability to perform. The little we have achieved is the ability of our colonial masters and our fathers to inculcate the spirit of competitiveness and achievement. When I got my International passort, the number was 5202. And for us to go abroad then was a big thing. We were then travelling there to beat those who have benefitted from the nurturings and civilisations and prove that Africa was capable of being the highest. Only to come back home and destroy the standards. Through ethnic chauvinism, religious bigotry and through simple dishonesty. That is why in 1983 we couldn't resolve the arithmetic problem of ⅔ of 19.

I think it is good we are doing a stock taking because by the time we are celebrating 50 years of independence, without solving these problems there will be few people living in this country, who want to be Nigerians. The few with opportunities would flee. And the masses will take over. And the French and Russian revolutions will be child's play.

Together again

The world holds its breath as the dizzying rush towards German unification culminates in the re-creation of Europe's most powerful nation. There's joy and bliss. But there's also apprehension and fear of a blitz.

By Mackson Onyeje

The scene of the historic unification of Germany were emotional. After over 45 years, Germans who had professed communism in the East and those who chanted capitalism in the West, threw away ideologies to embrace each other, hugging, pecking, kissing and crying for joy on each others shoulders. Nothing else mattered; just oneness, happiness and overwhelming excitement, manifest in fire-works, neon lights, church bells, singing, dancing and picnicking.

Everything happened so soon and too fast, leaving Europe uneasy. Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister worries over the emerging economic force of Germany; she also yells about insecurity, no doubt by way of hangover from the atrocities of Hitler's Third Reich. President Mikhail Gorbachev of USSR called on the United Nations to think of giving veto rights to a united Germany, Thatcher screams disapproval. Edward Heath, Britain's one-time Prime Minister had said the unification was not going to happen. Gorbachev himself had said it would fructify in 1995.

Helmut Kohl ... Breaking barriers

German unification bears a lot of prize: some are sheer bliss; some are sheer blithe. The bliss is on the prospects of Germany dominating the EEC economy. West Germany alone, with 19 per cent of the entire European community population, over 22 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and over 31 per cent of the exports, is already the most formidable economy in entire Europe. Add that of East Germany, in spite of all its troubles, and the giant becomes a colossus.

A united Germany also tilts the balance of global econometrics. Its 78.5 million population is not up to that of US or USSR but it belittles France's 56 milion and Britain's 57 milion. Besides, Germany is now over 60 per cent the economic size of Japan and over 20 per cent that of United States. Her per capita GDP swells to 15,912 dollars against America's 21,018 dollars, and Japan's 22,879 dollars. Also, her exports chest out to 430 billion dollars against Japan's 413 billion and America's 624 billion dollars.

Experts project that a control of over 22 per cent of the economy of the Western hemisphere by a united Germany gives her great leverage over all governments that spread from the Urals to Celtic seas. Meanwhile, the new Germany has stalled France's dream of strengthening its currency, the franc, in the EEC. Deutschemark is to appreciate. In fact, the unification of Germany has temporarily attenuated the pace of EEC integration process. Polit-

The world

QUOTE LINES

"There are a thousand million Muslims in the world, and it only takes one to murder Rushdie"

— London-based Islamic scholar Malise Ruthven on why improved Anglo—Iranian relations won't affect the "death sentence" on author Salman Rushdie

"We have to conduct our internal relations like other nations conduct international relations".

— Yugoslavian politician Kosta Cavoski lamenting his country's deep ethnic rivalries.

"If women want to engage in combat, let them. A number of them will come back dead. But what a scenario if others come back impregnated by the enemy"

— Spanish correspondent Dominic Portoraro on US women soldiers in the Gulf

"Not a single one approves of the women soldiers. Everyone is sure they are here to provide sex for the servicemen or, worse, to steal our husband".

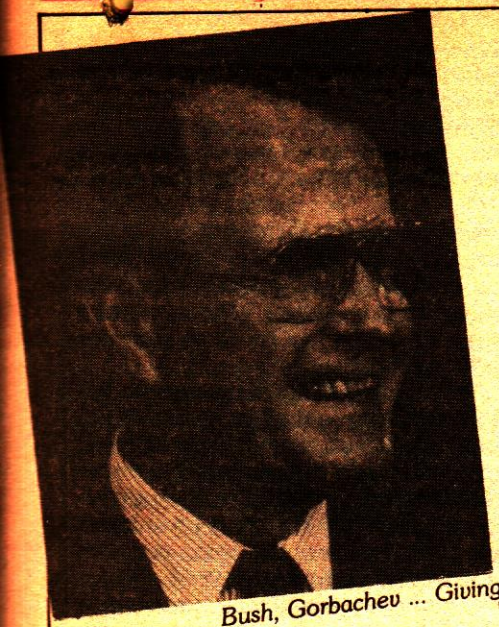
— Saudi Arabian beautician Rabieh Marmou

"We'll eat American fliers who fall from the skies ... No, we won't eat them, we'll feed them to the dogs".

— Iraqi Information Minister Latif Jassim on the fate that awaits US bomber pilots.

"Every time Saddam Hussein sneezes, the (oil) market reacts".

— American businessman Tony Lentini on galloping oil prices



Bush, Gorbachev ... Giving way to the new superpower?

Thatcher ... jitters

ical and economic analysts aver that soon one would mainly talk of Germany when one remembers Europe. And with economic might, the political and military prowess of Germany more than engenders apprehension.

However, German unification is not without blithe, evident in the disparities, on the levels of development, industrialisation and sophistication of the two countries. The opulence of the West would be expended to resuscitate and energise the pallous economy of the East. According to experts, to structure East Germany into the free market system of the West which it had known nothing about since 1933 when Hitler came to power, will take the same energy it took to build up West German from the ruins of World War II.

For over two generations, East Germans had not measured nor equated rewards with hard-work "West Germans in the '40s were willing to save, invest and work like slaves", laments Meinhard Miegel, director of Bonn's Institute for Social and Economic Research. "The spirit in the East Germans is to live as easily and happily as possible".

The West Germans would also suffer sudden structural adjustment in their style. The East Germans are said to be unprepared. "After living apart for 45 years" says one new nation-builder in Bonn, "West Germans and East Germans are almost as different as Germans and Russians"

More scaring signals are emerging: earlier, proponents of the unification said it would take only two or three years to raise East Germany to the standards of the West. Now they fear it might take about 10 years; cost up to a trillion dollars to provide infrastructure, force over half the work-force out of their jobs, while about seven out of every 10 companies would liquidate. The entire costing of the unification, earlier put at about $64 billion by the experts in Bonn, has been reconsidered, for at least twice, or more, of that figure.

Worse still, for many East Germans, socialism still exists. And the government would have to be firm to contain this mind-set, a situation which some analysts say is not unlikely to stir social unrest. Both for West and East Germans, a united German takes more than toasting on seasoned wines, in Bonn and in Berlin.

Nevertheless, the economic hurdles before Germany do not belie her astute military and political stature, which stigmatises the relevance of NATO, the Western military alliance. The scare about the political and military might of a united Germany and what she is capable of doing, is spreading all over Europe, especially in France, the Netherlands, Poland and among European Jews.

In Britain, it is more than a scare. Nicholas Ridley, the former trade minister expressed the panic when he likened the unification to the resurrection of the fascist Third Reich, and added that global peace and security were threatened by the agreements between Helmut Kohl and Mikhail Gorbachev on a united Germany. Though Thatcher removed him for embarrassing her government, both herself and those out of government are panicking and whinning about Germans. The widespread assumption is that Ridley only spoke in public what many Britons think in secret.

Kohl-Gorbachev agreements have illogicalised the justification for still maintaining NATO forces on German soil. Francois Mitterrand, French President, has already concluded that "it would be inappropriate for French soldiers to remain in Germany". For now, American defence officials wish to see a military alliance in which European governments have greater responsibility but European decision-makers argue against an institutionalised political and military alliance. Soviet—US rapproachment has further waned the fears that hitherto strengthened NATO, now leaving some "Atlanticists" regreting that the end of the cold war has weakened US—European ties.

Last year, Mitterrand and other EEC heads of government pleaded with Kohl to go slow on the unification. But he felt Germans wanted to unite; and rather hastened the process. The only way to counter German hegemony in the Western hemphere, the leaders reasoned, was to speed up the integration of EEC.

However, Helmut Kohl, the first Chancellor of a united Germany has repeatedly assured that Germany would neither threaten nor upset world peace. He has promised to prune German forces from 667,000 to 370,000, and stall the production of atomic, biological and chemical weapons as well as contribute 10 billion deutschemarks to enhance economic reconstruction of East Germany and the Soviet Union.

With the actualisation of German unification last week, the face of of the geo-politics of Europe would willy-nilly be determined by the policies and diplomacy of a united, strong Germany. A prospect that fills many non-Germans with understandable dread.

Life

IBB's son in high-noon traffic drama

Fame is shy a girl. A Lagos driver found this true when a car which ran into him turned out to be bearing the President's son

By Izuagie Umogbai & Mubo Okosun

The sun could fry an omelette on the sidewalk. The noon-day traffic was at its snarling best. Placid-looking drivers behaved like temporary racing drivers. Adrenalin surged into their veins. They squeezed into tight lanes, teasingly kissed each other's bumpers, thumped angrily on their steering wheels. They all seemed in a mighty hurry to keep their business appointments, but the sweltering sun and maddening traffic wouldn't let them.

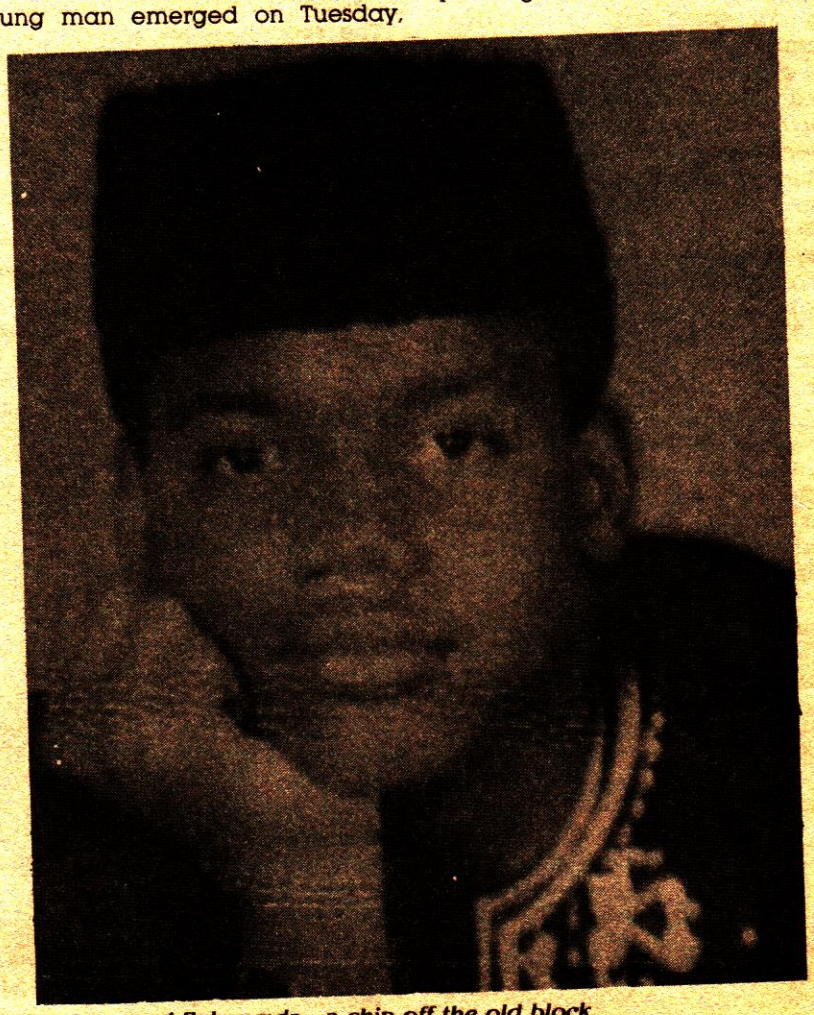
Welcome then to the magic and madness of Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos. To the uninitiated, it is the proverbial street paved with gold. It is strictly for the affluent and well-connected. From Whizz-kid industrialists, bankers, military big-wigs to globe-trotting business men. Awolowo Road, is also home to blue-chip merchant banks, exclusive eateries, glittering shopping malls, swanky interior decorators and swinging barbing salons.

It was from one of those avant-garde salons that a dark, strapping young man emerged on Tuesday, September 25, 1990. Clad in a floor-length, snow-white kaftan, he could well pass for another rich kid on the block. But his complement of aides screamed power and privilege. He also carried that famous face and sported that special spring to his steps.

Check out his credentials: Mohammed Babangida is the first son of the nation's No.1 couple. He combines the soft dark looks of the mother with the physique of his father. What you have is a chip of the old block. A stranger to many Nigerians.

Mohammed is not a stranger to the staffers of Unique Barbing Salon at 190 Awolowo Road, Ikoyi. No-one batted an eyelid when he sauntered in for his usual hair cut. He was also on appointment. After a quick haircut, he entered into plain Peugeot 504 salon car with registration number, LA 9053 AM for the journey home. Home happens to be Dodan Barracks, just five minutes drive through Okotie Eboh or Ribadu Roads. Since he was not behind the wheels he left that decision to his aide-cum-driver.

Traffic was now at a standstill, nerves were frayed from constant pressing of brakes and clutches.



Mohammed Babangida...a chip off the old block

Mohammed's driver, a dark, slight fellow signalled his intention to join the stream of cars. He studied the flow of traffic for a few minutes and spotted a slight opening for his car. He eased the car into the road only to run into another saloon car with registration number LA 6875 AP.

There was an angry dent where both cars collided. But Mohammed's car was the less affected. Worst hit was the car bearing an Asian and driven by a Nigerian driver. The right side of the boot was slightly crushed. Like a true Lagosian who would never run away from a fight, the driver sprang from his car and started raining invectives on Mohammed's driver.

To drive his point home, the Asian's driver almost yanked off the door of Mohammed's car. In rich pidgin he screamed. "You de craze? You no see me? Na how you go dey drive like that?" The driver who also sported a white kaftan started to mumble his apologies. But he made no move to come out. Instead, he tried to reverse the car before inspecting the damage.

The ranting driver thought he was trying to pull a fast trick. So he quickly entered his car and blocked Mohammed's car completely. Meanwhile, Mohammed appeared bemused by all the charade. He simply reclined in his seat with his palm on his chin and elbow on the door. Looking at his countenance one would have doubted his involvement with the accident.

Trust Lagosians, they had gathered as they never pass up any opportunity for a showdown. The driver was about to yank the car door off. He was that mad. These two guys have smashed his car and they are far from looking sober. Hell! he was going to show them! The shoves and the number of the mob must have made Mohammed uncomfortable. He reached for and started talking into a walkie-talkie in the car. His call for help was halted by his aide who grabbed the walkie-talkie from him. He spoke rapidly into it. The driver was unimpressed, because he continued his heckling. This time more vociferously.

Mohammed, now, decided to leave the comfort of his car. He sprang to his full height and stood beside the car. He placed his hands on the roof of the car and belted out a full throaty laugh. Meanwhile, word had circulated among the mob as to his identity. Only the angered driver seemed deprived of that vital information. He was still itching for a brawl. But the crowd waited for the fireworks.

They didn't have to wait for another five minutes before Mohammed's distress signal was answered. Reinforcements came in from all fronts. First on the scene was a white Peugeot saloon car with registration number 15 FGN 97. It carried two guys who struck the pose of security men. One wore a blue ill-fitting suit with a red/gold lapel pin, the other donned a white kaftan, and a hat.

The guy in blue started to grill Mohammed's aide. He later hopped behind the 'bashed' car and ordered the driver to move. This order was ignored. Soon after, a new batch of aides arrived in another 504 car registration LA 412 AP. Their suits looked like damp towels draped on the back of chairs to dry. They hung loosely on their bodies. However, these did not delay their swiftness.

They had started operating before alighting from their cars. Like sleek, professionall gun-men they sprang into action. They looked mean and acted the part. They grilled everyone present. But they spoke in Hausa when conversing among themselves. Somehow, the driver whose car had been hit started to get the import of the drama. So, he decided to keep mum. His Asian boss, who had been quiet all along picked up the baton.

The security aides ignored them and asked Mohammed to climb into the driver's seat of his official car. Traffic from both directions was stopped so that he could drive home safely. He entered Okotie Eboh way, while a security personnel went to join him to prevent further mishaps.

The other driver was by now shivering and muttering to himself. The security guys discussed among themselves what they could do to him. They asked him to open his boot and they proceeded to panel beat it with their bare hands. "No be im be dat," one of them chided the driver, apparently referring to his earlier belligerent posture.

Two other military police personnel also happened by the scene for a 'mopping-up operation.' The driver by now was at his wits end, he was a broken man. "I no know O. If to say he tell me who him be I for give am road," he said repeatedly. The sleek operators finally gave the exit signal.

The transformation was dramatic. He literally leapt into his car and zoomed off like a mad man. Even an escaped convict with a car couldn't have broken his record. Soon enough, the agents dispersed leaving the crowd clapping their hands in wonder and Awolowo Road returned to its traffic jam.

Apart from Mohammed, the President, Ibrahim Babangida has three other children. Aishat, Aminu and Halimat. Mohammed has been schooling in Switzerland before he was recalled back to the country. He is said to be a keen sportsman with a fond interest for athletics, tennis and golf. He is also known to behave impeccably at public occasions.

A source told ***TSM*** that he was surprised at his humility when he ran into Mohammed at Lagos Polo Club in Ikoyi recently. Except for the aides who followed him everywhere, he usually looked relaxed and friendly.

SUNDAY OJELABI

Awolowo Road...not for the common man

One of the boys

The backslapping and rib-cracking jokes were infectious. The convivial atmosphere suggested that it was a reunion of old friends — albeit scattered in varied aspects of the communications industry.

Kayode Adeleye, the new Public Relations Manager of Okada Airlines is no stranger to the media world. Afterall, he held down one of the most interesting personality slots on LTV 8 before the bug of Public Relations caught him.

To toast his new job and his old friends in the media, he had a luncheon party two Thursdays ago at Kitchen Restaurant in Lagos.

They included Dele Alake, Editor *Sunday Concord*, Richard and MEE Mofe-Damijo, Gboyega Okegbenro, *Prime People's* Editor, Dele Momodu, *Classique's* Editor, Segun Babatope, *Concord's* Editorial Board member, *TSM's* Mubo Okosun and *Vanguard's* Tony Okonedo.

They all re-affirmed that Kayode is still one of the boys.

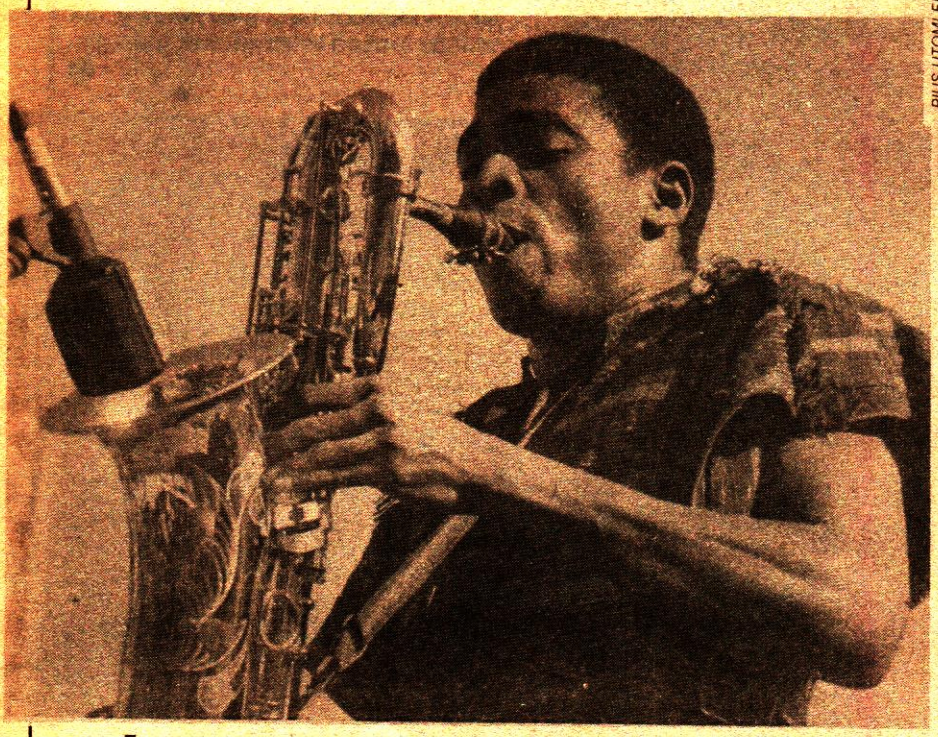
SUNDAY OJELABI

Kayode Adeleye, Okada's PRM confers with Igbinedion, Executive Director at the luncheon

What's On

Are you an elite? Then, don't shy away from that tag? Afterall, there is a magazine dedicated to your interests. The high-brow journal will be officially launched tomorrow at Commerce House, Victoria Island, Lagos. Nkanu Egbe is the anchorman.

PIUS UTOMI EKPEI



Like father like son. For years he's been in his father's shadow. As Femi Anikulapo Kuti, amply demonstrates with his saxophone he seems to be saying 'it's better to take one's destiny into one's hands.

Hot legs

Legs, lots of it will be on display next Friday at Federal Palace Hotel, Lagos. Beauty queens from 1960 — 1990 will go on the catwalk and show the stuff(s) they are made of. It's all part of the 10th anniversary celebrations of Silverbird Productions.

There will also be cultural shows, beauty tit-bits and glamour-huge doses of it! If you have always wondered how beauty queens manage to stay ageless and alluring this might well be your opportunity.

Dinner/variety time is 7 p.m. We'll be there, why not join us.

Steve's Soulful Voices

Some people like wine just get better with age. Steve Rhodes is one of such people, his greying visage has turned him into a cuddly bear. If only he can croon endlessly we won't mind nestling there for ever.

But he seems to prefer making music than cuddling, in fact he's into community outreach now. Music buffs should catch him at Apapa Club on Saturday, 13th October, at

Continued on next Page

Unical goes cap in hand

If you missed the launching of the Mandators' new album, here's another chance of watching them perform live. Also throw in Charly Boy, Alex O and Christy Essien Igbokwe. Not for free mind you, but you are quite familiar with the maxim that nothing goes for nothing! If you are a lover of education and technological research we bet you'll identify yourself with Unical's Endowment Fund Dinner.

They are poised to host society's who's who at L'Hotel Eko Meridien on Friday, 12th October 1990. For N500, guests will be treated to top-class fashions, fine music, exquisite food and wines. What's more you can help the 15-year-old university revive its abandoned projects.

Florence Ita-Giwa, Chief Executive of florebet is organising the N100 million Endowment Fund dinner in Lagos.

SHE is the Chairperson of the Search Committee. Other volunteers include Franca Afegbua and Jennifer Madike. The show starts at 7 p.m. while Shehu Musa, Chairman of National Population Commission (NPC) is expected to play the same role.

The fund raising proper will hold in Calabar later in the year.

PIUS UTOMI EKPEI

You've either got it or not. Style, that is. These women have it. Florence Ita-Giwa, Jennifer Madike, Franca Afegbua. They always twinkle like stars in the sky, they lit up Mandator's album launching recently.

Raunchy Charly

As nasty and wacky as they've always wanted to be-Charly Boy and Lady Di. As far as the duo can tell, nothing, it seems will put asunder what has been joined together. Struting on stage at the Unity Concert last week, it was fun for Lagos fans watching the twosome do what they know best - telling dirty jokes, party jokes that can singe a church goer's soul. But don't be deceived by their weird attires. It's all part of the show biz stuff.

PIUS UTOMI EKPE

Continued from Page 20

Ayota Arts Centre, Ajegunle on 27th Oct., all in Lagos.

A special fund-raising nite for the Federal Society of the Blind on 28th October rounds off the month of community concerts by the group.

Although they have left school they still hold their university dearly. Members of the University of Benin Alumni Association will rub minds on how to improve the state of their institution. Today's meeting place is the association's secretariat at 146A Adekunle Fajuyi Way, Ikeja, Lagos.

Consumer News

Bigg's carnival for kids

By Mubo Okosun

Anyone who knows the hassle of hosting children's parties will welcome this latest effort by Mr. Biggs. The fast food outlet in Lagos has literally taken the pain out of kids' bashes. The preparation, the guest list, the din and shoves have all been transported to their premises. Instead of squashed food marks on your clothes you can have fun for a change. You can sit back or dance away with the kids, rest assured that someone is providing the fun.

According to Janet Imolame Marketing Manager, Kingsway Fast Foods, "we want to add more glamour to normal celebrations like birthdays, in a controlled environment. Kids, she said, are then introduced to different forms of entertainment. They make new friends and feast on appetising snacks and drinks.

Special gifts are handed to celebrants, while the guests can partake in special raffle draws. Such was the carnival atmosphere that pervaded Mr. Biggs, Marina, Lagos, two Saturdays ago. Little ladies and guys swished past in flowery gowns, sexy bows, fancy shirts and natty trousers. They bopped to fast music while they munched contentedly. Other kids who had come for take-away packs watched them enviously.

Getting into the fact is as easy as ABC. If you have been thinking of celebrating your sibling's birthday parties in style, this might well be up your street. Why not contact Mr. Biggs - a Supervisor or Kingsway Fast Foods all in Lagos.

Pius Utomi Ekpei

Biggs...taking the pain out parties

New Product

Ben-Gay banishes pain

As many as 17 million Nigerians suffer from muscular distresses such as cramps, sprains and pains. They have now been offered a respite from their excruciating condition by Pfizer Products Ltd.

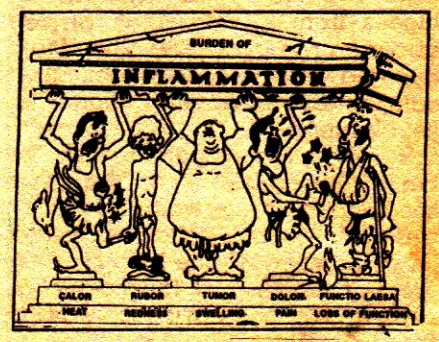
A new stainless ointment from its stable of pharmaceutical products is being touted as the new wonder drug. Ben-Gay will take the sting out of arthritis, waist pain, backache and other crippling ailments.

It is uniquely different from other balms already in the market, because of its greaseless nature and swift action. It also removes redness and reduces swelling instantly.

Sports enthusiasts suffering from stiff joints, elderly people who have endured years of rheumatic pain, children with sprained ankle from active pursuits can rub in Ben-Gay and get on with their lives.

Already, an aggressive marketing and sales strategy has been laid on to ensure that Ben-Gay becomes a prime product. They include an advertising blitz in the press, radio and television. Special retail outlets have been earmarked for direct sales and advice to consumers.

The new product comes in a colourful packaging that will endear potential clients. It is presented in two distinct packs of 35gm (standard) and 85gm (economy). These sizes sell for N14.60 and N24.80 respectively.



Ben-Gay...nothing to lose but pain

TSM

Serious but breezy

A week of shopping magic

A specialised fair kicks off in December on Allen Avenue — that glittering street in Lagos where shops compete in terms of sophistication and style. Window shops will be adorned to reflect the unique glow of that season.

Emeka Obasi, ex-*Classique* is the brain behind the fair.

He is the President of Cameo Adventures which is bringing out such musicians as Sunny Ade, Shina Peters and Onyeka Onwenu to entertain through the week-long fair.

According to Obasi, streets adjacent to Allen are already clamouring to be included in the project. Watch out for more details next week.

MILESTONES

APOLOGISED: Salman Rushdie, author of the book *Satanic Verses.* To all Muslims for any upset his book must have caused them. He said that 'the book did not set out to be the thing that it is accused of being.'

ELECTED: Winnie Mandela. To a senior position in the African National congress, ANC. She was elected to the regional executive committee of the organisation.

RELEASED: Nine French hostages. They were allowed to leave after the visit of Giles the President of the Franco-Iraqi friendship association.

DIED: 30 people in a commun al clash in Gongola State. The Jukuns and the Tivs clashed when two farmers suspected to be Junkuns were attacked and killed by unidentified assailants. The fight paralysed all activities in Wukari town and forced shops to close and people to go into hiding.

RECALLED: More than 650,000 cans of beef meant for Jord anian refugees after local health officials in Kuwait determined that they were not fit for human consumption. One official noted that the beef a gift from the EEC, was full of hair.

HUNGRY: Iraqi soldiers have stormed the Kuwaiti zoo, killing and eating dozens of gazelles, anthelopes and other animals. Reports also indicate that larger predators are roaming the streets. A child was said to have been killed by a lion.

ARRESTED: 30 officers of the Ugand an National Resistance Army. They were held in connection with the killing of more than 60 civilians in Soroti District in North East Kampala.

OFFERED: Free rooms to 'refugees' from Maroko. The offer was made by a native doctor in Ebute-Meta, Lagos. He said that the offer, which is of a newly completed building, was meant to ameliorate the hardships they were facing due to their displacement.

ARRIVED: Over 7,000 Nigerian refugees from Liberia. They arrived aboard a Nigerian vessel River Majidun and were taken to rehabilitation camps established by the National Relief Committee.

ARRESTED: Two Nigerian men for being in possession of the drug cocaine. The drugs worth N3 million were seized when policemen acting on a tip off raided the Martins Street area of Lagos Island. Thirty other suspects were arrested at the scene of the arrest.

HANGED: Five Fillipinos alleged to be Mercenaries in Kuwait. They were publicly hanged by Iraqi soldiers. The victims were said to be among 50 other Fillipinos who allegedly joined the underground resistance in order to survive.

Compiled By Izuagie Umogbai

BIRTHDAYS

Ken Saro-Wiwa...birthday cheers

- 55 today is Adebayo Akerele. Professor of economics and University teacher. He is the author of the book, *Management in Nigeria: concepts, problems and prospects.*
- 56, tomorrow is Shyngle Wigwe. Engineer, Administrator and ex-Director-General of the Nigerian Television Authority.
- 59, on Tuesday is Michael Adepoju Adeyemo. Economist and Chartered Accountant. He is a fellow of the International Bankers Association, Washington DC.
- 49 on Wednesday is Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa. Writer, businessman and publisher. He is the producer of the popular television comedy series 'Basi and Company'.
- 48 on Wednesday is Dayo Duyile. Journalist and administrator. He is the Director of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, N.I.J.
- 45, on Friday is Mohammed Nura Imam. Retired Air Marshall and present Minister for Mines, Power and Steel.
- 54, on Friday is Emmanuel Ayankanmi Ayandele. Historian and author of the book *Pioneers of African Nationalism.*

LIFE-LINES

DIPLOMACY is to do and say the nastiest things in the nicest way.
— *Isaac Goldberg*

A DIPLOMAT is a person who can tell you to go to Hell in such a way that you actually look forward to the trip.
— *Anonymous*

DESTINY: A tyrant's authority for crime and a fool's excuse excuse for failure.
— *Ambrose Bierce*

HONESTY pays, but it doesn't seem to pay enough to suit some people.
— *Kin Hubbard*

BEFORE you consult your fancy, consult your purse.
— *Benjamin Franklin*

OBSERVE your enemies, for they first find our faults.
— *Antistheness*

EXAGGERATION is a department of lying.
— *Baltasar Gracian*

UNCALLED-FOR excuses are practical confessions.
— *Charles Simmons*

FIRST find the man in yourself if you will inspire manliness in others.
— *Amos Brouson Alcott.*

I CAN resist anything except temptation.
— *Oscar Wilde*

THE pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.
— *Oscar Wilde*

SOMETIMES silence is not golden - just yellow.
— *Anonymous*

HE who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own.
— *Confucius*

THE best way to stop smoking is to carry wet matches.
— *Anonymous*

EVENTS:

GREG Obi must be sleeping soundly now, after his hectic marriage ceremony yesterday with Joan Akujobi in Lagos. We wish the lovely couple a truly happy married life.

Money

Under the blast of hostility

Criticism of the Companies' Decree grows even more strident

By Chudi Okoye

Maybe it shouldn't have been made the first decree of 1990. Perhaps it was a mistake to have effected so fundamental a law in the first month of the 20th century. Or how else is one to explain the howl of reaction dogging 1990's very first law, the Companies and Allied Matters Decree (CAMD)?

Ever since it wore on the garb of law last January, Decree 1 of 1990 has tumbled from one bout of controversy to another, in the process socked where it really hurts. Many informed interests, nettled by the perceived presumption of that piece of legislation, are up in arms, intent on knocking the CAMD out of kelter. So hot has been the heckling, so harsh the bashing, that everybody expects something to give. Especially with the turn CAMD — bashing appears to be taking.

"The Companies and Allied Matters Decree" rasps J.A.A. Adebayo, a chartered accountant, (is an) *indictment* of the Nigerian business community. It is an *assault* on the honour and integrity of (accountants)".

What seems to rankle the accountant most is certain insinuations in the decree, borne out in its section 359(2). That section, though hushed now by protestations from ICAN, is understood to imply that the hallowed vouchings of audit practitioners may no longer suffice to validate financial statements put out by companies. Only the addition of a lawyer's testimony, section 359(2) appears to insist, would confer the final stamp of validity on such statements.

This new provision should indeed shock any self-respecting auditor. For it implies that his word, hitherto held in high regard, can no longer be trusted. The unspoken suspicion, says Adebayo, is one which sees auditors in collusion with businessmen for designs of dubious nature, like tax evasion. It is on account of this suspicion, he adds, that formulators of CAMD went out of their way to strew in all manner of provisions meant to make cheating more difficult.

Indeed there's quite a pack of new provisions in CAMD. As if to pre-empt any sleight-of-hand on the part of those running a company, drafters of the new company law and had thought up a long list of checks. Some of these checks are in the form of disclosure requirements which companies are henceforth to provide in their annual reports. The new law on disclosure, both in depth and breath of information it obliges companies to reveal, is by far more exacting than whatever obtained before now. New items have been marked out for disclosure, for instance, directors' emoluments. Some others, already on the disclosure list, have had their scope broadened, for example tax, turnover and profits. The sheer volume of work which must go into complying with the new law is enough to raise the hackles of those on whom the onus falls.

The new company law, grumbles Anthony Ani, a former president of ICAN, is "overdetailed, unwieldy and dogmatic". And to J.A. Adebayo, it is an "awe-inspiring document" which requires a whole book in the name of annual report! Both men, not without a touch of cynicism, raise questions about the ability of monitoring authorities themselves to marshall enough resources to ensure com-

SUNDAY OJELABI

Jaw-jawing over the companies decree

Are these banks under threat?

By Chudi Okoye

One bright mid-summer morning in 1929, an unusual thing happened. A group of young West African businessmen in London gathered bits and pieces of a British bank they had acquired and set sail for Lagos. Weeks later, they berthed and set up shop for Nigeria's first indigenous bank. That heady act of self-assertion would later go scrappy when the group's baby, Industrial and Commercial Bank, floundered in 1930. But the young, zestful businessmen had spun the wheel of history. For, not long after their fated endeavour, a rash of indigenous banks sprouted on Nigeria's financial landscape. Throughout the '30s and '40s, nationalists and businessmen, alike driven by the dizzying impulse of economic nationalism, plunged head-first into the business of banking. Nothing could stop them, nothing at all could staunch their wild enthusiasms. Until the bank crash of the early '50s.

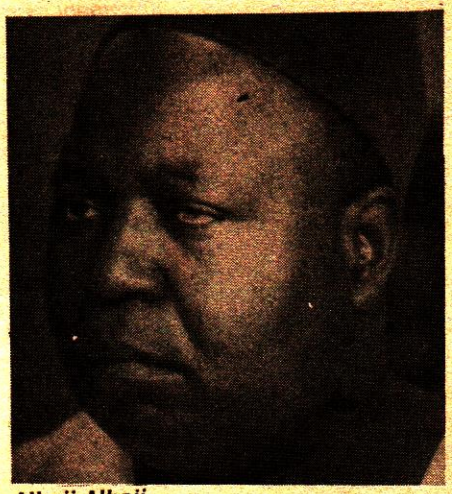
The crash was devastating. In a few years, the entire battery of indigenous banks went bust. All slumped, except the three (National Bank, Wema Bank and ACB) lucky enough to get a lifeline from their attentive regional governments. But for those three, Nigeria's first journey into indigenous banking would have come unstuck.

Today however, thanks to the insistent tug of indigenisation, reality is far removed from that dismal antecedent. More than 100 banks are now in saddle, majority of them of firm local ownership. By year end in 1989, 42 or 58.3 per cent of 72 operating commercial and merchant banks were indigenous (i.e. without any foreign equity). Indigenous banks also accounted for 79.6 per cent of total commercial bank, and 84.9 per cent of merchant bank equity.

Preponderance in number is not all there is. Operational orientation is light years away from what had been the case. No longer are Nigerian banks fixated, as before, with what Green O. Nwankwo, UBN's professor chairman, calls "established orthodoxies and conventional wisdoms".

Deregulation has generatd new exigencies which demand more responsive banking. Such it is that the banking sector is now aflame with "new products, repackaging of traditional products, product realignment, intensified marketing and public relations, growth in investment banking and growing emphasis on fee income", to borrow Nwankwo's catalogue. Going by the spectacular results of last year (even after adjusting for inflation) it would seem Nigerian banks have got something to show for their labours. But it is not time for hallelujahs yet.

Problems abound. While some banks seem well on course, quite a few are still skidding. In fact such are the travails of indigenous banks that, in the view of J.O. Onoh, a professor



Alhaji Alhaji

and director of operation's at the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation, the picture of their future is "very misty". These problems are both external and self-inflicted.

Many bankers are worried about CBN's insistence on the establishment of rural branches. Says Paul Ogwuma, Union Bank's helmsman for 11 years: "the authorities have to decide whether it is wise to force indigenous banks to establish rural branches which are unprofitable, especially if this can contribute to bank failure". Not all bankers however consider compulsory rural banking negative. Wale Adeosun, ex-MD of First Bank, suspects that without being forced to, Nigerian banks may never go rural. He believes that if properly organised, rural banking can indeed be profitable.

A major problem faced by indigenous banks is inadequacy of capital. A report put out recently by the National Deposit Insurance Corporation, NDIC, reveals that as at the end of 1989, seven banks, declared to be in distress, opeated far below solvency level, having had a "negative adjusted shareholders funds" of N763m. Twenty-seven banks were so under capitalized that they would require the injection of a staggering N1.248 billion, the lump of which would be gobbled by the distressed seven. In fact, as NDIC reports, 23 banks were unable to meet the statutory paid-up capital of N20m for commercial banks and N12m for merchant banks.

Along with persistent insider fraud, the most prickly problem indigenous banks are grappling with is huge backlog of bad and doubtful debts. In 1989, 50 commercial banks reported losses due to fraud of nearly N105m. If this boggles the mind, what about 'losses' due to bad debt? NDIC says that due to "halfhearted" efforts at loan recovery, 'classified assets' (well, bad debts) of all 62 banks surveyed amounted to, wait for it, N9.4 billion. This represented 280 per cent of shareholders' fund (1440.7 per cent for the distressed seven), and 64.3 per cent of total loans and advances given by these banks. In more basic terms, this means that for every N1 invested by shareholders N2.80 was lost to bad debt. It also means that for every N1 loan given, 64 kobo may never be recovered. And to think that this problem arose mostly because of careless lending.

The debt problem of indigenous banks is real. Paul Ogwuma, in a refreshing moment of candour, says the debt problem may not be as stark as NDIC makes believe because in the absence of provision for secret reserves (something banks put aside for the rainy day) some banks employ the ruse of 'bad and doubtful debt' to create some kind of secret reserve. Revealing as this may seem, it can only prove cold comfort. Especially in light of J.O. Onoh's reminder that by international standards, any bank with 'classified assets' exceeding 100 per cent of shareholders' funds is already a 'problem bank'.

It was a similar range of problems, notes Onoh, that brought banking, in the '50s, buckling at the knee. At the time, banks, in a fit of flighty nationalism, had really gone to town with lending and branch expansion.

Continued on next Page

pliance with these requirements.

Bitter concern has equally been expressed in regard to the ungodly haste with which CAMD's predecessor, the Companies Act of 1968, was shunted aside. Decree 1 (1990) purports an immediate repeal of that Act and an instant scrapping of organs by which provisions of the Act were enforced. One such organ, the Companies Registry, had been responsible for Company incorporation, business registration and sundry company — related matters. Under Decree 1 of 1990, its functions fall on the lap of a Corporate Affairs Commission, CAC, which has much more inclusive powers. Going strictly by the books, the Companies Registry ceased to exist from the moment CAMD came into effect, which was last January 2. Yet in the nine months since then, its successor, CAC, is yet to be put in place. This hasty despatch of the 1968 Act, without any thought to allow for a transition period, has, in J.A. Adebayo's view, created a 'palpable vacuum' which leaves everyone in an uncomfortable position.

By far the greatest issue of concern in CAMD has been the Corporate Affairs Commission itself. Many observers are irked by the sheer breadth of elbow room given the commission. Ibrahim Damcida, chairman of Nigerian—American Merchant Bank, says an organ like the CAC smarks of "vindictiveness, viciousness and sadism against the rich and the successful". Its creation, he concedes, may have been made necessary by need to protect small shareholders in a company. But it would appear, according to Damcida, that formulators of CAMD had been carried away, hence their creation of a virtual monster.

Company history in Nigeria is replete with board-shareholder dispute. In many such disputes the board, with its greater resources, had often come out triumphant. It happens however that these boards are in most cases dominated by holders of the largest shares. Which means that their triumph is actually the triumph of the preferences of the big shareholders. Decree 1 (1990) imbues its foremost organ, CAC, with powers to intervene, when necessary, in company affairs to ensure that justice is upheld at all times, that no one is mistreated on account of the smallness of his holding.

Ibrahim Damcida, himself a member of many boards, feels this is all wrong. Formulators of CAMD, he says have imported into rational economics the egalitarian precepts of political democracy. And in doing this have given too much power of control to the CAC over company affairs. "In an era other countries are loosening bureaucratic red-tape," Damcida sighs, "we seem to be tightening it. This is not good for the growth of commercial enterprise".

George Etomi, a legal practitioner, shares Damcida's misgivings. "The rate at which power is abused in this country", he warns, makes the CAC an unattractive proposition. While conceding the desirability of a mechanism to protect small shareholders, especially in public companies, Etomi says the CAC appears to have been hewed to control these companies. And this, he thinks, may discourage big-time investors.

Has the Companies and Allied Matters Decree ended up subverting itself? J.A. Adebayo thinks it has. And he finds this surprising considering the legal genius that went into drafting that decree. "The way of lawyers", Adebayo scoffs, "is like the peace of God: it passes all understanding!".

Only the guilty are afraid

— Justice Ministry

Except for a few occasions of self-explanation, Bola Ajibola's Justice Ministry has remained largely mute in the face of all the controversy the companies decree has raked up. *TSM* tried to get the ministry's reaction to some of the issues observers are raising.

Justice Minister Ajibola himself was not available but a senior ministry official who is quite close to the minister was on hand.

Q: Some say the new decree took effect rather too quickly.

A: It is improper for anybody to allege that there was any kind of haste. We went about it in a most meticulous manner. From the law Reform Commission, through a workshop and a high-calibre consultative Assembly, to the Justice Ministry, and then the AFRC. The whole process took over two years, and it is still on.

Q: Actually they mean that the 1986 Act was scrapped too soon, hence the existing vacuum.

A: There is no vacuum whatsoever. The Companies Registry is still functioning. Nobody has gone there without achieving his purpose.

Q: Isn't that illegal? The Registry has been abolished.

A: Make your own deduction. There's a difference between a decree being promulgated and it being operational. Besides, an amending decree can always be drawn up.

Q: Some complain about too many disclosure requirements.

A: Why the outcry? Do they want to run their companies like secret societies? Mark you, the FG didn't add much to the draft. The business community itself, through the Consultative Assembly, put it all there to protect anybody.

Q: The Corporate Affairs Commission is said to have too much power of control.

A: As long as a company remains healthy the CAC will not interfere. Only the guilty are afraid.

Q: Why is there so much controversy?

A: That is to be expected with a decree that seeks to introduce many changes.

Q: Is controversy crippling the decree? Why the delay in take off?

A: Government is trying to synthesize all the views so far expressed into one single document. We're almost ready.

Continued from Page 27

Under threat

Then too there had been problems of low capital base, bad management and stealing. Is one to conclude then that another crash is imminent?

Experts are at variance on this. Where J.O. Onoh sees a "very misty" future for indigenous banks, Nwankwo's crystal ball reveals something "very bright and rosy." Nwankwo believes that in spite of their torrent of troubles, indigenous banks are not in danger of collapse. His reason: their problems are not general; neither are they as glaring as in the fiery fifties. A central bank acting as lender of last resort now exists; as does a deposit insurance corporation as confidence-booster for the saving public.

In spite of his optimism however, Nwankwo concedes: "this does not mean that bank failure is not possible, or even desirable. It is. A properly managed bank failure, he says, may serve to make banks sit up. He therefore admonishes monetary authorities to refrain from propping up collapsing banks. They should be left to die naturally.

Question now is: with several banks tottering on the precipice which should be made the scapegoat?

By Ochereome Nnanna

A teacher who didn't wait for heaven

Again Michael Omolayole is honoured by young managers and students of economics and management.

When a group of alumni of the International Association of Students of Economics and Management (AIESEC, Nigeria) approached Michael Omolayole in 1985 and told him of a plan to float a distinguished annual lecture series in his name, even though he remembered the story of the pied praise-singer, he told them to go ahead, in his usual manner of encouraging young people who want to try their hands on lofty enterprises.

The AIESEC alumni, decided to bestow this singular honour on Omolayole because as a member of the International Board of Advisors of AIESEC and chairman of the Board of Advisors of the Nigerian branch of the association, and also as the first Nigerian Chief Executive of Lever Brothers Nigeria Limited, he had contributed immensely to the training and development of managerial practices of the association's members.

According to Awak Essien, the National President of the association, the lecture series are meant as AIESEC's contribution to the economic discourse of the nation. The 1980 s witnessed a great upsurge in the awareness of the importance and sophistication of management to the economy of Nigeria, especially in the agricultural, industrial and capital market sectors. No executive of any organization could claim to be the sole spring of wisdom in management of resources. Therefore, AIESEC, through the Annual Omolayole Management Lectures, aimed to bring together top executives of progressive business organizations to share notes and experiences, right in the presence of students of economics and management from Nigeria's higher institutions who are registered with the association.

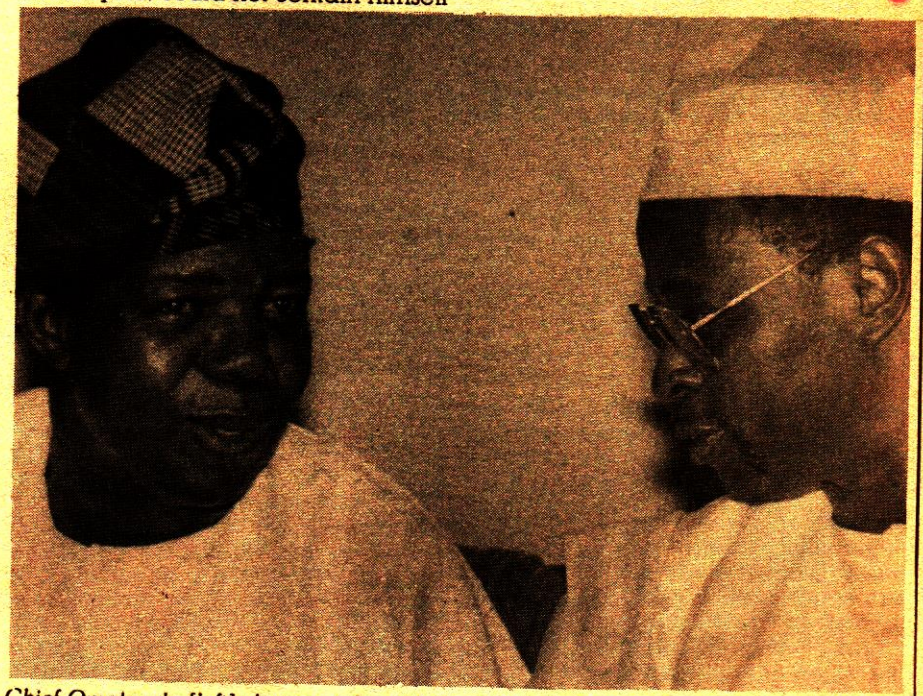
The idea is to single out specific fiscal and monetary policies enunciated in the year's budget and analyse them in order to help managers to contribute to the country's economic growth meaningfully. This year's lecture, titled: *"Survival Options for Small/Medium Enterprises in Nigeria"*, delivered by Femi Adekanye, Chief Executive of Commerce Bank Limited, is the latest of distinguished sessions of which O. Osunkeye of Food Specialities, Hayford Alile of the Nigerian Stock Exchange, Michael Balogun of the First City Merchant Bank, Oluwole Adeosun of NAL Merchant Bank and Ernest Shonekan of UAC Nigeria, have participated in, since its inception in 1985.

The man at the centre of it all, Omolayole may be wary of praise singers but on this day, he could have chosen to run, but he would not have been able to hide from the barbs of praises that were shot at him from the left, right and centre. The difference is clear here. While village praise singers work at puffing up the ego so that naira will fly, board room praise singers end up humbling the subject the more. They are only reading out facts and figures.

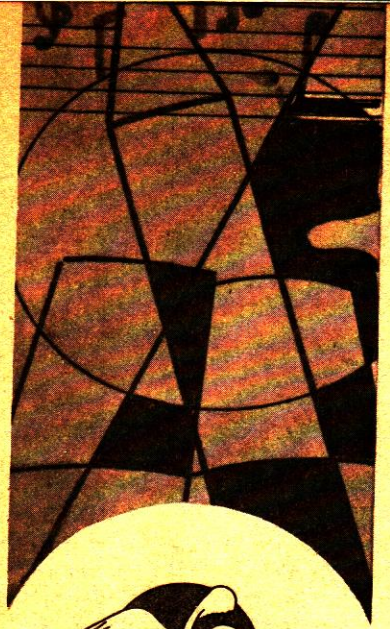
They say that evils that men do live after, while the good are interred with their bones. Olumuyiwa Odunniyi Runsewe, who, in the mid 1970's was the brand manager of Vim in Lever Brothers during the reign of Omolayole, could not contain himself as he showered praises on his former boss. To show that he was no mere praise singer, he dug deep into the resources of his company, Singafrique (Roofing) Engineers Limited to sponsor this year's lecture. Runsewe's dream had really come true, because for three years, he had been begging the AIESEC executive to give his company (reputedly the third largest in the business) the honour to sponsor a lecture.

Described as "a celebration of managerial excellence" by Adekanye, and as "a man who draws you to himself through his manners and actions" by Awak Essien, Michael Omolayole, dressed in a simple light blue *agbada* sat quietly beside former Finance Minister, Olu Falae, looking as if he were not the one being talked about.

He only exploded to life when he got up to make a speech, during which he re-ignited the auditorium of the Nigerian Institute of Bankers with his sharp edged wits and well-aimed treatise on the need to keep companies' boards stable, with democratically elected agile minds.



Chief Omolayole [left] shares a joke with Special Guest, Chief Olu Falae at the lecture



Arty stuff

Glamour boys live it up with Eves

By Izuagie Umogbai

It was tagged the night of fun, thrills and fibs. We saw the fun, we saw the thrills, but there were no fibs to be found.

From the gate, the first impression one got was something akin to what you get when you step into an enchanter's home. Expectancy tempered with awe. This was induced by the presence of the camera man complete with blinding kleig lights. It was like being in one of those Holywood shows, where each of the arriving stars was bathed with the spot lights and confetti.

The effervescent ushers and usherettes gave one the impression that he was the long awaited one. The Comfort Okoronkwo-led team almost fawned on everybody.

The show started off at about 9.30 pm with a performance by the Grand Boys, the in-house entertainment group performing to the delight of the audience.

They married the song 'Niteshift,' made popular by the Temptations with beautifully choreographed dance steps. After this came the 'Guvnor' of the club, Ken Caleb-Olumhense in his Priests Habit complete with a stole Chassuble and all. He came to start the show. The proper whole place had a carnival air about it.

It was the Glamour Boys of Nigeria's night and one could see enchanting glamour reflected in everything around. Niteshift was packed with boisterous and gay people. To start with, the Glamour Boys of Nigeria and the girls (for there were girls among them) had chosen to wear shorts as a sign of identification for that night. There were long shorts, abbreviated shorts, baggy shorts, and slim shorts. The personality of the wearer was reflected in his choice of shorts. Omasan Buwa, the ex-beauty queen, was wearing a pair of adire shorts with top to match, she crowned this off with an exotic looking scarf of some strange cotton material. Fred Amata of 'Ripples' fame was wearing what could safely be called a pair of long Johns, they were that long.

Segun Joseph's shorts were perhaps the most flamboyant and the most outrageous of them all. His was a pair of black skirt-like shorts (another pair of shorts could have been made from the excess he chose to wrap around himself). For a top, he had on a black jacket of the same material, he then crowned it all with a black also of the same material with a scarf around it.

New glamour people were brought into the fold that night. Tony Okoroji the PMAN President led the play. Also inducted with him were Funmi Ajila, the two plump Ibru girls, Gloria and Eileen. Chuka Momah and Jennifer Madukwe of Biofrica made the presentations.

After this, the Gold Card was presented to the Kuboyes, Tunde and Fran Kuboye. Richard Mofe-Damijo and Florence Ita-Giwa made the presentation. They also had caught the carnival spirit and throughout the presentation, Richard played the part of a true cavalier. The whole evening was like an onion with each new layer coming out juicier than the former.

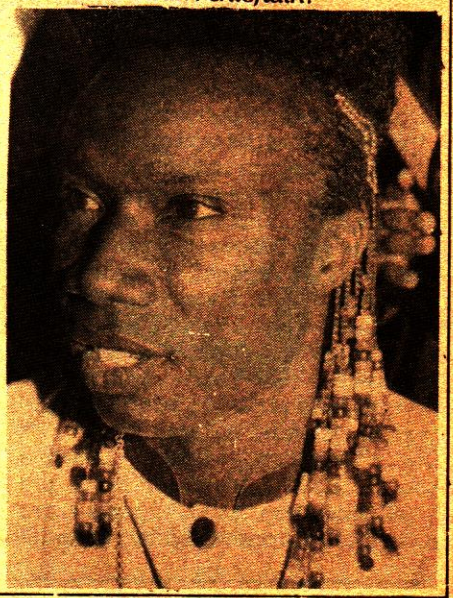
The anthem of the Glamour Boys of Nigeria was sung by Mike Okri, Wunmi Aboderin and some others. Okri was wearing a shinny yellow top. He could easily have passed for a Warri chieftain, only they hadn't got round to wearing his type of hair style. It was outrageously high. Talking about hair styles, the ones Charley Boy and Lady Di were sporting rivalled the leaning tower of Pisa in height, it was as if Charley Boy and his wife were competing for the ceiling.

The glamour night, judging from the attendance was a success. One would only hope that the next glamour night would start on time and improve on their first outing.

PIUS UTOMI EKPEI

Tony Okoroji...glamour boy

Mike Okri...Warri chieftain?



To whom much is given

Shell Petroleum celebrated 30th anniversary of the nation's independence by shelling the quiet town of Port Harcourt with exquisite music

By Yusuph Olaniyonu

The President, Ibrahim Babangida, must have been shifting responsibilities when he decided that the federal government will celebrate the 30th independence anniversary on a low key. And the tacit implication of that resolve must be for those individuals and corporate bodies who have benefitted from the nation's independence to rise up to the occasion and give the much that is expected of them.

So, at the serene water-side city of Port Harcourt, Shell Petroleum Company decided to call friends and well-wishers alike together to celebrate the independence anniversary amidst music, food and varieties of entertainment.. So, the last day of September to the morning of October 1st saw Shell welcoming "the celebrants who arrived safely" to its spacious, superbly designed (achitecturally) club at Rumuokoroshe in Port Harcourt with flags, bounties and annivers ary lights.

The two days helped to relieve men and women fully saturated with the problems and tensions of getting oil to the world market. As they giggled and mimed music from the Soul train orchestra led by ever-green lady of music, Christy Igbokwe and the Oriental Brothers band led by Sir Warrior, it was obvious they needed that change of scene.

Rumuokoroshe was adorned with the best textile materials ranging from George, Shivon lace materials, the native Aso-Oke, linen, voile and tie-dye (Kampala) materials. The varied costume of the guests gave the ceremony a true national outlook.

From the moment James Iroha (a.k.a Gringory) of Masquerade drama series started off the ceremony with his 'rib-breaking' gists, the night promised moments of exhilarating experiences.

Christian Okoene, the President of the Shell Club had in his opening speech made the usual stock-taking of the nation's travails in the last 30 years and concluded that several mistakes had been made in the past just as several positive steps had been taken. He therefore called for a sober reflection on the next 30 years of our independence.

Okoene's submission probably sets the tone for the performances of the two invited bands. Sir Warrior, a veteran musician took his urbane audience to renditions from the past and it was all dainty steps, waist wriggling and body swerving.

But when Christy Essien-Igbokwe made her appearance on the stage in her black overall with wine tops, the dance floor was set ablaze. You would think she has just clinched a MAMSER contract as she preached the independence sermon, through her various songs. She appealed to the different segments of the society not to renege on their responsibilities in building a great nation.

Remember *'Give me a chance'* which is akin to a call for Nigerians, then 'konkoma', and Nigeria kwenu'. In all these Essien Igbokwe and her band demonstrated the rich culture of Nigeria and the agility of the musician who after four issues is still able to go the whole hog. Talk about energy sapping acrobatic dance step, she gave all she got.

She also had *'Omo mi seun rere, she is a woman and Ranti O'* the lady of songs preached the importance of motherhood and the fact that Nigerians of all classes are products of the women folk. It was like a mirror of the 'better life for women development. Igbokwe also reached out to the children in *'See the children coming'* (an adaptation from her yet to be released album). However, Essien Igbokwe did not fail to remind Nigerians that if after 30 years the citizens have not learnt to live in unity with each other then all hope might have been lost. At least that was her message in *'Ife'* and *'Have you ever loved'*.

But the most important achievement of the independence celebration was the ability to reflect the Nigerianness in the songs and beats. The audience were so thrilled by this pot-pourri that they yelled for more even after the leader of the band had indicated the need to take a nap at about 4.00 am. in the morning. As fans trooped back home in the morning, they could not but give kudos to Shell for putting back some of what it has taken from Nigerian oil wells through entertainment.

SUNDAY OJELABI

Essien-Igbokwe...better life for all

We need a revolution

Mandators don the rebels' toga to call for a new social order.

By Dan Onwukwe

For about 15 years that they've known each other very intimately, the Mandators *(Victor Essiet and Peggy Imanah)*, believe they have seen and experienced more negative things than anyone should be allowed. "We have suffered together and seen poverty in all its different forms," Victor told *TSM* recently. No less disturbing to the duo who met while at Saint Timothy College, Yaba (Lagos) is their marriage life which made front page news in some tabloids recently. "We certainly don't deserve all these things people are writing about us," Victor emotionally said. "We have not betrayed anyone and I don't see why people are fighting to bring us down. But we're firmly together and open to Jah to help us."

Whatever may have happened to the couple, Victor believes isn't different from what other people have gone through. 'I know when I speak in this way, I not only speak for myself, but for other people who have either undergone the same experience we have suffered or may not escape going through the same thing.' But the Mandators are hoping against the odds that they can use their music to change a few things that have gone wrong in life.

Ask the Mandators what they want most in life, they won't hesitate to tell you it's equal justice and universal love of all nations. And this they strongly believe to bring about through their latest album REBEL, re-released last week. What could they be rebelling about, *TSM* asked the Mandators. Victor offers an answer.., "ever since generation," "we have been hearing things will change. Have things changed?". The system of things according to the Mandators has reached a crisis point that it looks certain it's only rebellion and revolution that will make things get better." In his words, "situations have reached a natural time bomb" that nobody can stop it any more. But the 'rebellion' the Mandators are expecting to happen soon, according to Victor will come naturally. "You can't call for it any more," he said.

They believe the time has come for government to take the lyrics in their songs very seriously. 'Human dignity is seriously wearing out, the poor and the weak are suffering all sorts of hardships, but the situation won't continue like this without the people, the poor who form the backbone of the nation reacting. That's what we're *rebelling* against.

With *Rebel*, the Mandators believe they're now an unstoppable positive force of a new kind. It is an album they told *TSM* that will move them up at a rocket speed. They believe, and strongly too, that they are now poised to become the most successful reggae group in the country. The duo boast that the 8 track album will surpass the sales they recorded in *Crisis* and *Rat race* which according to Poly Gram, their record company sold over 250,000 copies officially.

The Mandators have found one love with Dolly Parton, the American singer and actress. In their last album they remixed one of her popular songs, *Coats of many colours*. And in their new album they also adapted her *too late* song as their own. According to them "we seem to have the same background with her. She sings of poverty and suffering in America that's not often highlighted by the media in that country. When she sings about love, it's so touching to us and when I go through my life, I discover we've experienced so much and in my family too. When I check them out, it gives me a lot of concern. He who feels it, knows it".

Life, it seems now is getting fine with the Mandators. This is no joke. A time was when the couple had no place of their own. Had to sleep in inlaw's house. But today the picture looks different. Success they believe has its rewards. And the twosome believe their hardwork, "divine inspiration" and dedication has led them this far. Today there's no more talk about their former Lawanson residence that used to be flooded each time the rains came calling. They live in a cozy air-conditioned duplex in Palmgrove area of Lagos, with all the trappings of success including a telephone, a BMW car and a visitors' room that's as big as a conference hall. As they quipped 'we have arrived'.

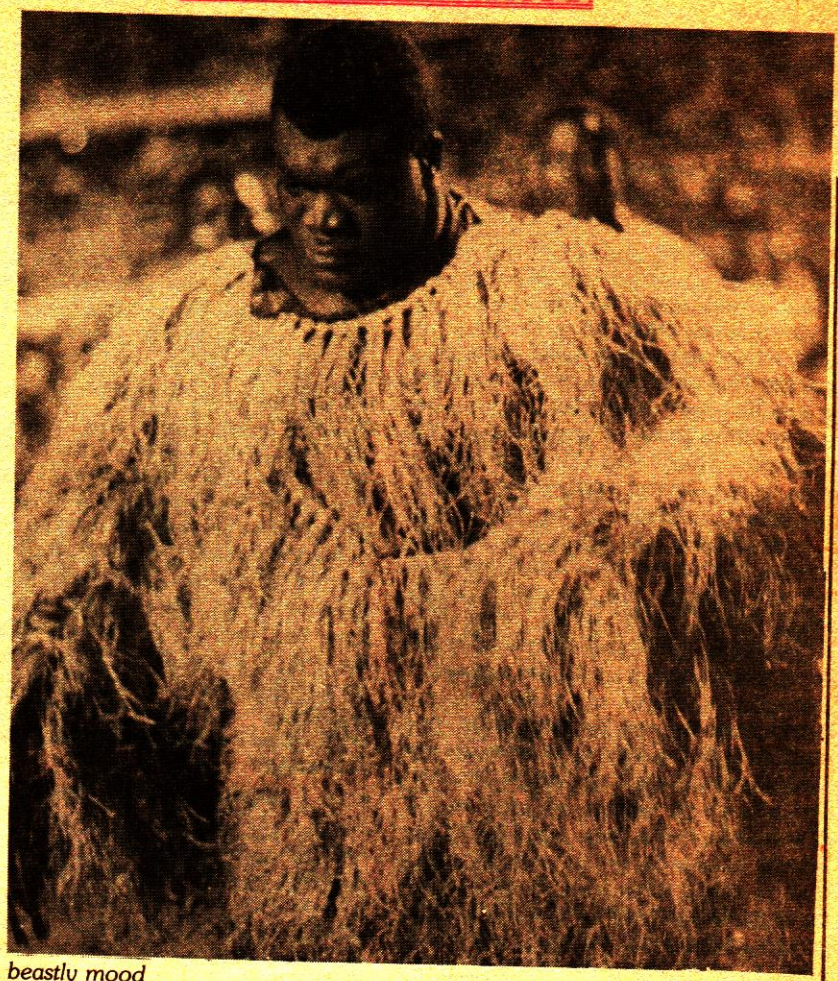
What matters according to them is the ability to turn life around from penury to living well. And with over N.25 million raked in since the album was launched. The Mandators may never know poverty again.

PIUS UTOMI EKPEI

Victor Essiet...the system must be changed

Sporting

Power Uti hits back at Power Mike!



SUNDAY OJELABI

Uti in a beastly mood

By Ochereome Nnanna

Power Uti would rather wear two types of suits when making a public appearance — a suit of coat and trousers, or more preferably, a suit of raphia palm with a tiny, funny-looking masquerade on top.

Penultimate Tuesday, as he stormed *TSM's* premises, one of our type-setters Sola Oladapo, took a look at his bulging bull-neck which showed through his solid suit (not of raphia) and quickened his pace as he headed from the Litho room back to his desk-top.

Uti looked awesome in his suits and out of them, but beside the Ugandan Giant, Kamala, he looked like some kind of superman toy.

The renowned wrestler had an axe to grind with his former promoter, Power Mike, who had, in *TSM's Sporting's* earlier editions, chided him for being an "ingrate".

He met *TSM's* top wigs, Chris Anyanwu and Ely Obasi on seat. They listened sympathetically while Uti spilled the beans. They chipped in questions and wrested from the superman, a glimpse of some of the drama, intrigue, power-player, subterfuge, wheeling-dealing, anguish and triumphs that go into a typical wrestling show. .

The lesson you learn is that it takes more than mere physical strength to be a successful wrestler. You have to be adroit at dressing-room chess games. Sometimes you beg or bribe or threaten to be allowed to wrestle .

Grrrrr! Ahhmm!!

"If Power Mike does not shut up, I will expose him B-A-A-D!"

Says Ely Obasi, *TSM's* Editor, after the two-hour encounter: "Uti struck me as a strong man who does not go flaunting his strength, but who will strike hard when the occasion calls for it".

He's all yours"...

TSM: You are here for something. What is it?

UTI: Yes, because Power Mike is jealous of the Great Power Uti, he is jealous of me. He believes that he's got there and nobody should be there. And that's not fair. You cannot climb the ladder and say nobody could climb the ladder, because if you climb the ladder and remove the ladder, the spirit of God will tell you to put the ladder back. And then by the time you know that someone is up there, you come and remove the ladder ...

TSM: Are you there? On top of the ladder?

UTI: I've already climbed the ladder. So I'm on top now.

TSM: Why did Power Mike make that statement about you?

UTI: I don't know. Power Mike is supposed to be the ingrate, not me. He didn't make himself. Somebody made him, Chief Eddie Ugbomah (boss of the Nigerian Film Corporation) made

Power Mike. I'm not going to talk more than that. I just want him to remember that Eddie Ugbomah made him, and Power Mike never made me.

TSM: He never sent you to Trinidad and ...

UTI: No, no, no, no. Power Mike never taught me how to wrestle. In fact, the person who discovered me is Enebeli Enebuwa. You know, I was a Superman. I lifted a Mercedes 911 engine, carried five men on my shoulder and all those stuffs. Then I went on NTA's talent hunt programme in 1979, Enebeli Enebuwa came to me and said, why don't you go and wrestle? I went to Power Mike to teach me how to wrestle and Power Mike told me he had no time to teach somebody how to wrestle. Then I went to 7 Up Superman and in fact, it was he who taught me how to wrestle in the first place. But he himself did not know how to wrestle, but he put me through. He was a body builder. He put me through weightlifting and some wrestling. When I saw that *7 Up Superman* doesn't even know how to handle himself, I went to practise on my own. In fact, I know how to wrestle spiritually, nobody taught me how to wrestle. Before I went to Trinidad, I had already wrestled with Silver Gun of England under Power Mike Promotions, and I beat him. My first opponent was Timesman Udoh, and I beat him, too. Power Mike brought this guy from the United States .... em... what's his name ... Luis Martinez. I lost to Martinez because I did not know how to time. I had hit him down and climbed the rope, intending to land on him with my knee, but he got out of the way and I hurt myself. After the match, I said to myself, I am very very strong but I don't know how to time. Some of the wrestlers that came to the tournament included Ray Apollon. So I went to them and said, "men, you guys say I'm good. I performed well in the ring. Why don't you help me?" They said "well, if you have some money, we're going to take you to the United States".

I said okay, I have some money. Just to let him know about my plans, I went to Power Mike and said look, I'm going to the United States next week with these guys. He said no, no, no, don't go to the States. Because he was jealous, too. I told him if I go to the States, I'm going to make it faster; that's where the action is. He said why don't you go to Trinidad, but I insisted on going to the States. He said if you could accept my offer, I'm going to pay your to and fro ticket. I told myself well, he made me an offer, let me do as he says. That was why I went to Trinidad. He paid my (return) ticket. In fact, he gave me N1,500. The ticket cost N1,266.

TSM: How long did you stay in Trinidad?

UTI: I spent one year there. Power Mike didn't pay one per cent. In fact I went to Trinidad with my money. Ray Apollon will tell you. In fact Ray Apollon will be here on November 2 to wrestle with Mighty Igor. When he comes, ask him who took care of me in Trinidad.

TSM: What did you do in Trinidad?

UTI: I went to Trinidad to train with Apollon, especially to learn timing. Apollon and all the other wrestlers told me my weight was low, very very low, and therefore I cannot wrestle (effectively). Then I was weighing 147 pounds. Apollon put me on a special exercise because I had to weigh at least 225 pounds before I could wrestle. I was light heavyweight here. There, there is no light heavyweight. Everyone is a heavyweight and I had to make 225 pounds before I would be heavyweight. Within three weeks on the exercise I got the weight. I went to wrestle in all the West Indies or Caribbean Islands... St. Vincent, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and so on. I wrestled in about eight countries there within the 12 months. Then I came back to Nigeria, together with Ray Apollon. That was the time he wrestled with Igor for the second time. In the first place Power Mike paid my return ticket. I'm not disputing that, I'm not saying that he didn't help me, but Power Mike got more than what he helped me for.

TSM: How?

UTI: When I came down with Ray Apollon, I was not in the bill. Apollon was to wrestle with Igor, while Mil Mascaras was to wrestle with Mighty John ... But John ... went to South Africa, so he could not come to Nigeria. He was refused visa at Nigerian Embassy. Power Mike complained to Apollon that there was no opponent for Mascaras. Apollon told him that Power Uti will beat Mascaras any time, anyday. I left Apollon to do the talking. Apollon told

SUNDAY OJELABI

Slugging it out with the Ugandan Giant, Kamala

SUNDAY OJELABI

"Power Mike believes in fighting me"

Power Mike that Mascaras drew with Steinburg of Germany, but Power Uti beat him. So, with that he was convinced that I could beat Mascaras. On my behalf, Apollon negotiated a N7,000 bill for me to wrestle Mascaras. Mike agreed. But later, he beat the price to N500. He said he knew that if I beat Mascaras, my name would go up just like that, and that he didn't want me to wrestle Mascaras again. I said why? He said because of what he just told me. He chose Ben. Then I said I was not going to wrestle again.

TSM: The Lionheart?

UTI: The Lion... But chickenheart, not the Lionheart this time (*everybody laughs at this*). Then, Jean Andre who is now my manager said to me, look, you have been away for 12 months. Whoever asks you to wrestle, just wrestle anybody. You've got to let the people know you're here to stay. Then I went back to Power Mike and said whoever you want me to wrestle I am ready. He said fine. But I told him I still wanted the N7,000. He said he would give me N500. I said what? I was very sad. I said how can you pay me N500 after I have spent 12 months in the West Indies? He said if I don't want it I should forget about it. I said well, if I don't sign for the fight, he might do something else. It would seem as if my 12 months in Trinidad was wasted. So, despite Apollon's advice that I should not wrestle for N500, I agreed. At that time it was still being announced on the radio that Power Uti would be wrestling with Mil Mascaras. In other words Power Mike was using me as publicity gimmick, to get the people to come and see me wrestle with Mil Mascaras. When I came out of the dressing room, I saw Mascaras with Ben in the ring! That was the fight that destroyed Ben, that was his last match ever. I knew in my heart that Ben could not handle Mascar as, because Mascaras is a good wrestler. I would have been the one to handle Mascaras becuase I know all the techniques. When he hit Ben, Ben could not move. Ben started holding the ropes, pulling at Mascaras' mask and biting. They disqualified the match.

Power Mike came to me and said men, don't destroy my show. I want you to put up a good fight. He knelt down for me, begging me that I should not destroy his show! He said because Ben destroyed the show, he wants me to perform well. I said I'm going there to wrestle the way I want, not how you want. What I want is what I do. I did my best. I wrestled with Yasu Fuji I beat him and they never wanted me to win the match. The referees were bought over. When I pinned him, they never counted. If you see the cassette, there was a time I forced him to submission and they never raised my hand up. Power Mike did it. He wanted to destroy wrestling. Why should he buy the referee over? Why? Do me a favour. Get the cassette. Watch it over and over and tell me what you saw.

TSM: Why didn't the referee want you to win?

UTI: I don't know. Power Mike didn't want me to grow up.

TSM: You're saying that Power Mike is jealous of you?

UTI: Power Mike is jealous of the Great Power Uti. Formerly I was just Power Uti, but when I became the *Great* Power Uti, Mike was pained. He has been fighting me spiritually and physically and now he wants to start with the Press. (Voice rising solemnly). The same Christ that saved me spiritually, is the same Christ that saved me physically and is the same Christ that will save me forever. Power Mike has no power over me. And I want Christ to go and talk to him. God has been talking to him, I know. He will surely obey, because if he doesn't, he will end up fighting God.

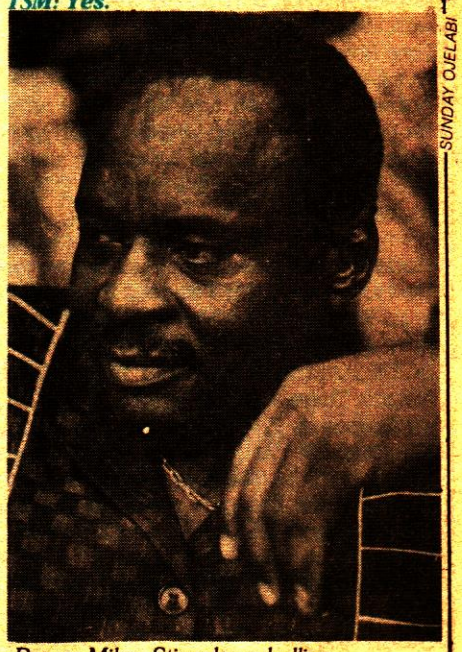
TSM: What do you do outside wrestling? Do you live in the United States?

UTI: I don't live in the US permanently. I live there maybe six months, then I come down here and stay, maybe three moths. You know, I travel all over the world. That night, I will never forget that night because that was the night I proved myself. Many people who compared my fight with ... and that with Luis Martinez saw a great deal of improvement. You see, Power Mike is even jealous now because no one can beat me. Even Luis who beat me in 1982, I can beat him within 27 seconds.

TSM: When was the last time you wrestled?

UTI: In Nigeria?

TSM: Yes.



SUNDAY OJELABI

Power Mike: Stirred a rebellion

UTI: The last time was in April this year when I wrestled with the Ugandan Giant Kamala. I beat him. In fact, at Owerri, there was a time he tried to hit my head on the table. I got angry. I hit the table so bad that I broke the table. I gave N200 to the Sports Council there for the table. Go and ask them. I hit my head on the table gbum gbum gbum until I piecessed the table, and paid N200 for it. But Power Mike is not hapyy. Why is it that your fellow Nigerian is the strongest man on earth and you're not happy? But that doesn't bother me.

TSM: What do you do outside wrestling?

UTI: Outside wrestling? Wrestling is my job. But sometimes I preach the word of God. In fact, very soon, I will come out in a big way in preaching the word of God, the word of Christ, (he assumes a clerical tone), because that is the only way. If somebody does wrong to you, you've got to forgive him because you have also wronged God in so many ways. That is why when you pray, you ask God to forgive you the known and unknown sins you have committed against him. But for Power Mike, it is fighting, fighting, fighting.

In fact, I don't want to talk mucn about Power Mike. Now that I say that, I pray and hope that you publish this. And let him come out and counter me, then I will finish him completely. I'm not Ben Lionheart — I-AM-NOT-BEN-LIONHEART! I am the Great Power Uti. I can endure. There are so many things Power Mike has done to me; if he doesn't shut up, I will expose him so BAAD that he will leave Lagos and go to his gym, and in his gym he will disgrace himself so people won't notice him. Because I will let people know how Ben Lionheart left the scene, what happened to him. And I will let people know how he left wrestling, and why he doesn't promote wrestling, why he promotes only native wrestling, and I will back it up with so many things going on.

I have gone into so many problems because of Power Mike. I said it to nobody before. For instance, if the American Embassy could do me a favour, they should go and ask the President of the American Wrestling Association, Gagne. There was a time I was wrestling for Gagne in 1985. I wrestled for him in Chicago, St. Paul in Minnesota and many parts of the USA. It was a tough fight before the guy allowed me to wrestle for AWA, because according to him, a Nigerian Power Mike, cheated him and his friends and because of that he didn't want any Nigerian. It was one Mrs. Jennings, a white woman, who helped me talk to ... so that I could wrestle in the AWA. In fact, I am the only Nigerian who can boast of wrestling in all the major associations in the world. In 1982 I wrestled for NWA, (National Wrestling Association). 1984, I wrestled for CWA (Continental Wrestling Alliance).I am the champion of CWA. 1985 I wrestled for AWA; 1986, I wrestled for World Class. It was only the WWF (World Wrestling Federation) I did not wrestle for, for reason personal to me which I am not ready to disclose to nobody.

SUNDAY OJELABI

"I'll soon become a preacher

There are so many other ways Power Mike has fought me, stopping many fights, and if he doesnss't shut his mouth, I will let the world know what happened between him and Rocky Johnson. And there was a time they said they stripped my title. That was 1985/86. That time I was the CWA junior heavyweight champion. They published it in the papers. They used Trigo Egbegi *(National Concord's* former Sports Editor popularly known as Mr. Boxing) as their front man to go to the USA to talk to the President of the CWA. I'm glad that Trigo spoke to the boss of the CWA Donald C Dreck and he spoke to the former champion Dino Rosetti and D.C. Dreck. Unfortunately, when he came down here, he published something wrong, that they stripped my title. That is one of the things that affected his appointments in the *Concord.*

TSM: Who is that again?

UTI: Trigo Egbegi. In fact I did not want to take *Concord* to court. I didn't want to fight back. I wanted God to do the fighting for me. I know that God is with me 100 per cent and I know he will fight for me. If you want to destroy me, I know he will not just look at you just like that. In fact Power Mike used John Mugabe and ... that bald-headed boy boxer — Marvin Hagler. They used the Mugabe — Hagler fight as a cover to send Egbegi to the US, but they wanted to intimidate me.

But if Power Mike does not shut his mouth up, his MON (national honour) will be stripped, because I will open my mouth so loud; so L-O-O-U-U-U-D, so B-I-I-G (laughter from his audience). Let him just shut up or I will put a finisher, a finisher to him; he will never be Power Mike again. In fact, the four of him cannot beat me. So I am glad. And the Power I'm using is not my strength, it's the Power of Christ. In fact if you're fighting me, you're fighting Christ, and nobody wants to fight God. He stripped Ben's title. He cannot strip my title. Ben is a chicken heart. I am a strongman.

A very very strong man, and I can take anything, anything. I know how he stripped Ben's title, how he went to London and returned to Lagos. He can't do the samething to me. There is a great difference between N7,000 and N1,300. Eddie Ugbomah, who took him to Ghana and England, did he pay him anything? He should not be in a glass house and throw stones.

TSM: Now you were talking about Christ, the word of God, and so on. Suppose you go into the ring and kill your opponent? Suppose the person dies in the middle of a fight?

UTI: I have the strength to kill a man, but I don't want to kill a man ...